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STARLIGHT—THE PRESIDENT

The Cats' Convention

BY

EUNICE GIBBS ALLYN

Illustrations from life by the author

Cochrane Publishing Co.
Tribune Building
New York
1909

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To all Good Cats
and Lovers of Cats this book
is affectionately dedicated
by
The Author.

PREFACE.

I have had a great many indulgent friends among animals, and by means of this book shall try to pay some of the debts that I owe them.

Horses and dogs have their lovers and defenders, but cats are still suffering from being misunderstood and consequently abused. I shall present no arguments in this preface regarding their commendable endowments—letting learned scientists tell the story by means of the scholarly members of this convention as here reported.

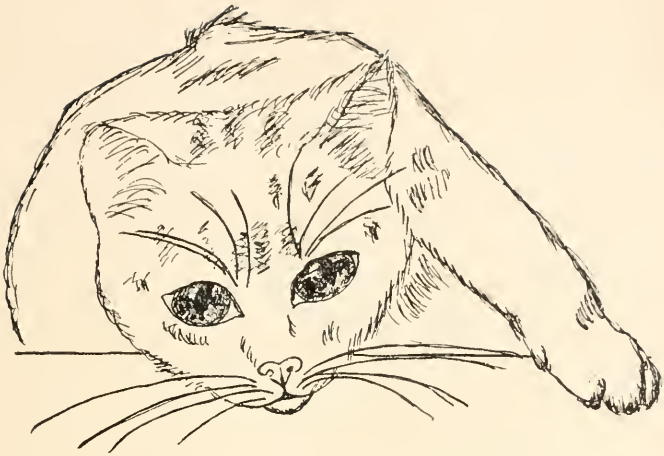
The artist and the writer find close companionship in a loving cat.

To the pet cat every movement of its owner is of interest. Every stroke of the pen or brush is watched, and, when unable longer to restrain his desire to help, the cat reaches out and delicately touches that article, his touch is so light and loving, it is not an annoyance but an inspiration.

The cat seems to know how far to go to be companionable, how far to go without interfering with the comfort of his owner. He is cozy and responsive in a way only recognized by those who are in sympathy with him.

In effect, all of the cats here recorded are living or have lived.

So, in memory of those loving pets who have looked beseechingly into my eyes as the light of life was going out of their own, and those who still bear me company, I inscribe this volume. THE AUTHOR.



THE CATS' CONVENTION.

CHAPTER I.

I am a cat, and my name is "Gyp."

We, the cats, held a convention, and, as I was made secretary, I have been ordered to give to the world for the benefit of our race the result of our proceedings.

We advertised, by our own "Wayside Press," that we would meet some time in May to discuss our grievances, and the ways and means of bettering our condition.

One Tuesday morning, about six o'clock, I was very busily employed watching a spot under a board where I had seen a rat disappear—for you know rats are restless at certain times of the day and are apt to reappear

within ten minutes of their departure from any special place—when I saw Muggins, Mr. Cady's black and white cat, approaching. I felt very much like scolding him for disturbing me and trespassing at that moment upon my premises, but he sat down very quietly upon all of his feet, and waited politely for me to finish my work.

Just then a great red ice wagon came lumbering through the alley, and I knew the rat would wait some time before he made his appearance, after all of that dreadful racket, so I got up on the same woodshed with Muggins and sat down on all of *my* four feet, or, rather, my paws and my feet, thinking I would take a good look at him, and see whether or not his intentions were friendly. I presume he had like feelings with regard to me.

I knew, as he had come to my house, it was my place to extend the welcome, and as I like at all times to be friendly, I said that which would have sounded to those unacquainted with our language:

"Me-ew."

Muggins answered in the same strain; then we knew everything was all right, and drew nearer. If Muggins had said "Mo-ow," I would have known that trouble was brewing.

My guest then informed me that the subject of holding a convention had been agitated for some time among the different coteries of our

race, and he wanted to know if I would attend.

"For what purpose is the convention?" I asked.

"To secure greater consideration for us," he answered, "and to eradicate as nearly as possible the erroneous impression the human race has of us."

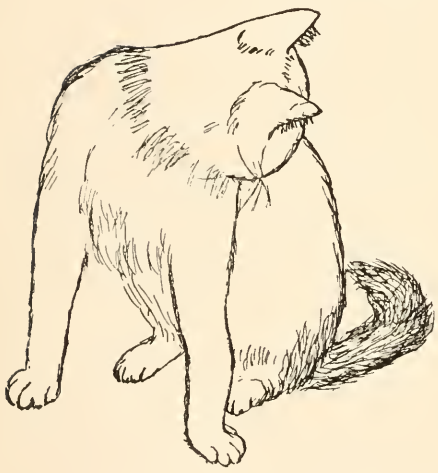
Muggins lives with a highly intellectual family and has acquired, as you will observe, a very fine vocabulary. He has learned also to speak in quiet, pleasant tones, and we often have delightful visits together, for, although my family is an ordinary one, and I am kept just to catch mice, and receive only an occasional petting, I enjoy the gentle refinements of life, and like a conversation composed of something more than commonplace remarks.

One cat I meet, Ho-ang-Ho, always spends the time talking about what he has, and what he has not, to eat, and the size, condition, and taste of the last mouse he caught. Really such talk is tedious and not at all elevating.

Well, to return to Muggins.

"Many cats," said he, "have signified their intention of attending, and in order to include the members we wish, the sessions necessarily will be held mornings, because some of the sleek and pampered pets of the neighborhood are not allowed out at night, and afternoons are kept within doors as parlor ornaments for

the benefit of callers. It is very doubtful about our obtaining the presence of the great and wonderful 'Starlight,' as he is kept entirely within doors. The only manner in which an invitation could be extended to him was by one of our number esconcing himself in the centre of a tulip bed from which he called to Starlight who sat in the parlor window. It was Mopsey who delivered the message, and when the lady of the house discovered her pet in conversation with an ordinary cat, she made repellent demonstrations, and Mopsey immediately wriggled himself from his fragrant rendezvous, from the vicinity, and the unfavorable espionage."



I confess there are times when Muggins, with the best intentions, uses a little more language than is necessary.

"Where are we to meet?" I inquired, feeling that my language was very poor when compared with that of my caller.

"In Mr. Hoxie's barn," answered Muggins. "He keeps his horses perambulating the avenues and purlieus of the city the larger part of

the time, and not any of the human species are permitted to accelerate the momentum of leisure hours by partaking of the hospitality of his barn, consequently there will be an agreeable vacancy in that vicinity on that morning, and thitherward we may bend our ready steps."

I said: "Yes."

When I regained my breath I added: "Please give me the exact hour."

"When the chimes ring out for nine on the ambient air," said Muggins, "and the youthful inhabitants have proceeded schoolward, we expect to convene in solemn conclave."

I could only say, "I shall certainly be there."

I received two more invitations, but doubtless I would better reach the subject of this report and omit a repetition of the conversations, as the parties will be introduced later on.

That bright May morning, nine o'clock, found a goodly company assembled. I had never seen so many cats together before, and there were so many colors and such marked contrasts that I thought of my mistress, who always calls any motley array of colors a "calico ball."

Turvey called the meeting to order.

Turvey was a very large animal in clear black and white, and used to having his own way. Turvey lost his name mate, Topsey, when both were young, and he never seemed

as cheerful afterward, although he had intelligent ways that endeared him to his owners and caused him to receive better treatment than otherwise would have been given him. Turvey's people had a gong to their front door and it rang by pulling down a crank; this suited Turvey, and he would reach up his long length and pretty white paw, and, giving the crank a good hard pull, would sound the gong, and was always admitted and encouraged by his owners to continue in his method of demanding entrance. *My* people have electric bells.

We all liked Turvey, and accepted his temporary assumption of the gavel with "sublime equanimity," as Muggins said.

The rostrum was an upturned half barrel over which, strangely enough, had been thrown a gayly colored half-worn lap robe, and from this position Turvey made his speech.

"My dear friends," said he, "the greater number of you have been informed briefly of the object of our meeting, and that there may be no delay I suggest that we dispense with preliminaries and proceed at once to permanent organization. If that meets with your approval I ask that some one nominate a permanent chairman."

Cries went up from different parts of the assembly room designating neighborhood

favorites: "Don," "Stephen," "Bounce," "Katrina," "Guy," "Gyp," "Purr-Purr," "Muggins," "Plato," "Romeo," "Puss," "Buster," "Banjo," "Bones," "Tom B.," "Yankee," "Bonnie," "Dixie," "Dolly Varden," "Amber," "Malteaser," "Starlight," "Starlight," "Starlight."

Then I arose with all the dignity I could assume and said:

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: The name I shall now pronounce is not a strange one to you, nor to the public in general. His mother came over the briny sea, his forefathers sported in far off Asia. Before him were many generations of cultivation, in fact, his especial variety of our race is known to have been the first to start upon the upward grade of civilization, and the story of his individual qualities may well come before us at the proper season. It is understood we are here to discuss our grievances. The one whom I shall name admits that as far as he is concerned he has few abuses from the human race to complain of, and, therefore, it seems as if he would make a candid, unbiased chairman. Having been almost always within doors, he has absorbed more of an education than falls to the lot of most of us. I know I shall be ably seconded when I pronounce to you, Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen, the name of Starlight."

There was a chorus of cheers, and immediately Muggins sprang to his feet and said:

"Mr. Chairman: Could words be a thousand time odoriferous of sentiment, could affections and inspiration throb and pulsate, then would this room quiver and vibrate with reiterations of 'Starlight,' of which reiterations I now furnish one, as I second my friend's nomination of 'Starlight,' for President of this convention.

We began to think we were making a fine start.

Turvey put the vote, and the election was unanimous.

At this opportune moment Starlight walked into the room with a dignified, unobtrusive, and self-contained manner that assured the convention of the wisdom of its choice. He had taken advantage of open doors to slip away from his home.

The chairman delegated Muggins and myself to escort the newly elected President to the platform—an office which we gladly accepted and performed to the best of our ability.

Upon taking the chair, Starlight said:

"The honor you have conferred upon me I duly appreciate. My life has been a happy one, but that has not blinded my eyes to the misery of others. In the daytime the best of food and drink is mine, and I sleep on ruffles and laces in the sunshine or out of it as I de-

sire, and at night I sleep at my mistress' shoulder, and know very well that where there is room for her there is room for me. Flowers are brought to me for my own use. My picture has been painted and my photograph taken. Twice only I have been struck by my mistress, and afterward she said it was all her fault and she was very, very sorry. No, I could not do anything to offend her, I love her too well. But all of my pleasures do not balance the unhappiness of the lot of many or most of you. Were I less happily placed I might suffer as you do, probably more than most of you, for I have had enough unpleasant experiences with strangers to know that I should not be self-assentive enough for my own good. I shall aim to be an impartial chairman, and if I fail in any particular, I trust your reprimand will be ready and honest. Shall we now elect a secretary?"

There is no need of repeating the complimentary things said about myself, in nominating and electing me to the desk, but I was sufficiently flattered to accept with the feeling that I was wanted. I am a pure Maltese, with the extra Maltese toe, and, being one of the largest cats in the city, fancy that Starlight in his coat of dazzling whiteness and I made a moderately good-looking couple with the sun glinting in upon us from the east windows.

After thanking the convention for the honor

bestowed upon me I asked for some instructions, hoping Muggins would not think me personal.

"Mr. President," said I, "I would like to ask whether or not I am to report these proceedings and speeches verbatim, or shall I simplify the language in order to make it come within the comprehension of children as well as grown people?"

"Mr. President," said Muggins, "I suggest that the language of this convention be retained in the reports. It is not our fault if children cannot understand us. If parents take due interest in the education of their children they will early instruct them in the mysterties of English."

"Mr. President," said Katrina, who ought to have been named Richard, and who belonged to a highly literary family, and had heard a great deal of language, "I agree emphatically with my friend Muggins. Children are fed too much on baby talk. My mistress was brought up on Sir Walter Scott and never forgot language. I move, Mr. President, that the language of this convention in form and sentiment be retained."

Plato seconded the motion, and it was passed without a dissenting vote. I did not vote.

That point being settled, the President said:

"May we now learn from some one the object of this meeting?"

In answer to numerous calls Romeo appeared and addressed the company.

"Mr. President and Friends: Doubtless many among you could place this matter more ably before the convention, but none could feel the necessity of meeting together and considering the affairs of our race more strongly than I. Mr. President, briefly stated, our desire is so to place our grievances before mankind that it may understand the false light in which we have been held by a majority of people; that we are neither sly nor treacherous, that we are neither thieves nor murderers of helpless infants, the murdering, with rare exceptions, being the other way; that we are made of dainty flesh and blood with the most sensitive nerves of all living things, and that we cannot endure the hardships of cold, hunger, blows, and all sorts of abuse and live; that with proper care we live to be twenty or twenty-five years old, but with present treatment are considered old when we have reached a quarter of that age.

"We are well aware that in the best homes and among the most cultivated people, and especially among literary people and artists, we are loved and honored, and accorded gentle care, and in such cases we give acceptable com-

panionship. That we are needed for the comfort and companionship of mankind, he proves by keeping us, and by that token we have a Divine right to a proper amount of comfort and care. We know some of our abuses come from ignorance and some from the natural depravity of man and dogs. We claim to be superior as pets to dogs, because we almost never make an attack on anybody or anything except to claim the food which nature seems to have made for us and which man expects us to take. We do not have to be muzzled, and no ordinances are ever made to confine us within prison doors. These things, Mr. President, comprise the central thought of this meeting. Incidentally we expect to become acquainted with each other, comfort those who are in trouble, help to feed those who are hungry, and secure homes for the homeless. Mr. President, I have finished."

"In what manner will you have this convention conducted?" asked the President.

There were loud calls for Taciturn, and presently a long, pale-gray cat marched to the front and sat down. Taciturn had worked his way to prominence by catching the water as it dripped from the tap into the sink to wash his face. His was also a literary home, his mistress conducting a private school. Doubtless others of us could have done the trick had we been allowed the opportunity, but my

people, who are not literary and have not read much, act as if I were going to poison the whole household if I get up any higher than the floor, and I often wonder how they would like to go around looking up at something as high as a steeple all of the time. You may be sure there is no fun in always being down on the floor with the ever present chance of being trodden upon. We would have to be supplied with numerous eyes to see just when we are in somebody's path. When we are walked upon and made to suffer tortures it is not pleasant to hear: "That cat is forever in the way."

I did not think it my place to express these sentiments aloud, for officers are prominent enough anyway without appropriating the time meant for the body of the convention. I once heard of a club woman who, being President of her club, used to call her meeting to order, read an essay, and close the meeting without another voice being heard except her own; I hope we cats know better.

While these thoughts were passing through my head, Taciturn sat arranging his subject matter for presentation. I do not think he is so taciturn as his name indicates, but he is deliberate and thorough.

"Mr. President, Friends:" said he, "Since receiving the invitation to attend this, to me, important convention, I have considered the

ways and means by which best to accomplish the object for which we have met. I would suggest that this first session be devoted to desultory conversation, wherein stories may be told and the separate individuals of our organization brought to the front. I would suggest that an Advisory Board be selected to choose a Committee upon Resolutions. In this attempt to ameliorate our condition, the only method is to formulate resolutions bearing upon the subject in hand, and spread those resolutions broadcast over the land. Therefore, great wisdom should be exercised in the selection of that committee, and this will be the duty of the Advisory Board. I would recommend, Mr. President, that the qualifications of the members of this convention be duly considered with reference to the important position mentioned, and that the Advisory Board inquire into their ability, and that the names of those selected be read before the convention and duly voted upon."

"Mr. President, may I interrupt?"

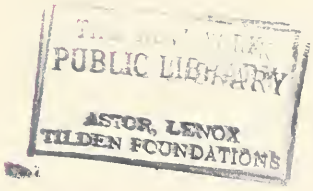
The question was asked by Catfish, a very nice gray and white cat, but possessed of a mouth of such extraordinary proportions as to secure for him the designation mentioned.

Having been recognized, Catfish said:

"Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask how many members will be upon the Advisory

"MAID OF AVENEL"

KATRINA. "SPOSE"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Board, and how many upon the Committee of Resolutions?"

"What is your suggestion, Taciturn?" said the President.

"I think," was the answer, "that I would make the Advisory Board large, because it will have to be that which our masters might call a 'smelling' committee, and I think three upon the Committee of Resolutions enough."

"Will you state the exact number, Taciturn, that you think best for the Advisory Board?"

"Nine," answered Taciturn.

"Please put your suggestion in the form of a motion in order to get it before the house."

"I therefore move, Mr. President, that an Advisory Board of nine members of this convention be appointed to select by careful consideration a Committee upon Resolutions."

"I second the motion," said Flute.

The motion was carried and the question arose as to how the Advisory Board should be appointed. Fiddle, following the expressed sentiment, moved that the President appoint the Advisory Board.

Katrina gave a cordial second, and the motion carried unanimously.

Our Chairman chose with great wisdom, for the names he mentioned were from widely separated parts of the city.

"Then, according to your instructions," said he, "I suggest Taciturn, Banjo, Bones, Turnback, Columbus, Eulalie, Junior, Plato, and Sweetness."

Columbus begged to be excused as he had so much to attend to just now, but his talent at discovering recommended him so highly that he was retained despite his protestations.

As Chairman, Taciturn thanked the President for the honor conferred upon him, and said: "I would like to make another suggestion, Mr. President."

"Proceed," said our President.

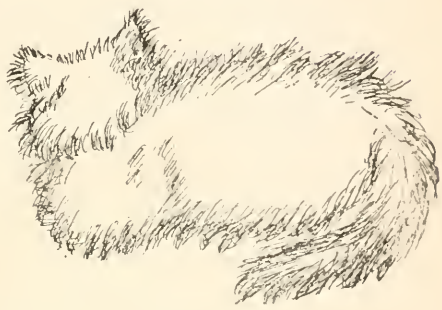
"It is, that as a board we do not come together as a committee until after this meeting, in order that we may miss nothing contained in the speeches."

This was decided upon as the best plan, and a meeting of the Board was called to take place immediately after adjournment.

I might as well, right here, describe the personnel of the Board. Taciturn I have mentioned. Eulalie was pale Maltese color and white. She had a good home and was sweet-tempered, but had the peculiarity of purring but little, and, however much she was petted, seemed to be denied that pleasure of expression.

Turnback was a medium-sized cat, and his master said he never attempted to do anything but that something interrupted him and he

turned back. His peculiarity would have caused him to starve to death if his master had not been very thoughtful, for Turnback never ran for a mouse but that something more enticing sprang up near him and caused him to turn back. Turnback's master said he was a good schooling for the household, for his fruitless exertions taught the children the wisdom of not being diverted by trifles from actual business.



Columbus was a great, soft, yellow cat, with white throat and paws and golden eyes. He kept himself spotlessly clean, was the chum and idol of his owners, a great favorite with visitors, and noted for his conversational powers and restlessness. Columbus was also a parlor cat, and not allowed to make himself common by going upon the street.

Banjo and Bones were brothers, but had been separated so long that they would not have known each other had they not been introduced by their mother, who also happened to be present. They were black, of fair size and intelligence, very talkative, and always answered with a pretty purr when spoken to.

Junior had a miserable home, was bright and active but far from pretty, for his color

was a dull gray, his tail was frozen off, and his ears split in several places.

Plato was a large, handsome, black and gray striped cat with fine eyes, which seemed bound in black velvet.

Sweetness was a little cuddling white mamma kitty, and we all thought rightly named.

Just as I was thinking over the tout ensemble of the board, I heard Romeo say:

"I should like to ask, Mr. President, that when the Committee of Resolutions is appointed, it be allowed as usual to have until near the close of this convention to bring in the resolutions, because, naturally, the subjects for discussion will bring out the points upon which the resolutions are to be made."

It was decided that the position was natural and was well taken, and the convention in due form acquiesced.

I find myself inclined to prose regarding the personnel of the convention, but as a general thing will stick closely to my text, describing only those who take some active part.

At this point the President recognized Muggins, who said:

"Now, that we have the machinery of our convention in running order, I suggest, Mr. President, that we resolve ourselves into a sort of an experience meeting and listen to some

of the stories that I know are waiting to be told. I should like to hear from our President."

This desire being expressed by others, our Chairman graciously responded.

"My friends," said he, "you have all been led to believe that I am possessed of superior qualifications, because you have heard of the exhibition of my acquirements. Some wise human being has said: 'To be a wit you must live among the witty,' and, my friends, many of you may be much more intelligent than I am, but if no one near you cares enough about you to report it, how is it ever to be recognized? My people love me and have developed my faculties. It is possible that I have inherited some qualities from my mother, who was a bright representative of the Angora tribe, but I am sure many of you could do as much as I, and probably more, if you had been as tenderly cared for, and pleasantly encouraged to cultivate and exhibit the qualities which, I believe, are inherent in the majority of the members of our race.

"We do not understand the language of human beings, neither do they understand ours. My mistress professes herself unable to learn Sanscrit, but I do not believe that even she, in the kindness of her heart, has stopped to think how much harder her language is to us than Sanscrit to her. Mankind uses far more

words than we, but not so many wonderful inflections. A cat can express almost any sentiment in the tones of his voice. Cats in general know far more than they are given credit for knowing, but when one is encouraged to let his light shine out he is regarded as a marvel. Could we make our owners understand, our lives would be happier. Sometimes they doctor us for ailments entirely different from those which are afflicting us, and, of course, the medicine under those circumstances often kills the innocent sufferer.

"When kittens are losing their first teeth they often are afflicted with 'fits,' which more than half of the time are simply spells of dizziness which frighten them into trying to run away from them, because they do not know what else to do. This trouble often runs into convulsions and often, oh, too often, the sufferer is kicked out of doors or dashed with water. After I had passed through one convulsion I remember very well that my mistress used to watch me, and when she saw the least indication of approaching trouble, would hold and smooth me until the dizziness and other unpleasant sensations were gone. This gentle treatment cured me entirely of this terror of kittenhood. It is dreadful enough to go through such sickness without being made to suffer physical torture because of it. Babies have fits from worms and from teething, but

they are not dashed with water and kicked out of the house to add to their torment.

"When I first experienced the dreadful sensations of which I have been speaking, I thought the world was whirling around, or that a mowing machine was running full tilt in my head. Of course, when you treat a cat as if he were a railroad accident or a cyclone, he will be more and more frightened every time his head begins to whirl. Just realize the sources that are drawn upon for the benefit of people when they are overtaken with weakening of the nerves. They have great physicians, they go to sanitariums, to Europe or the West Indies, but the more a cat needs gentle treatment the less it has, and the less fitted it is to endure cold, hunger, and fright. It is thought by some that any place is good enough for a cat. Did you ever notice how a cat will seek the finest, softest, warmest, prettiest place in the room for its couch? If discomfort is as comfortable as comfort, why does the cat seek the latter rather than the former? If a cat has not the nerves to suffer, why is one place better to him than another? More often than otherwise, cats are not only uncomfortable, but they suffer acute distress.

"Not only their nerves, but the very fibre of their flesh suffers. Look at their frozen ears, sore eyes, and broken and cut-off tails.

"They were not constructed to endure the

hardships of the Northern winters, and yet they are forced into killing surroundings by subjection to man, and know of no other course than that of submission. There is no alternative but death, and to nineteen-twentieths of us this comes prematurely. We are made so nearly like human beings that we are often dissected as a study for anatomy, and when it comes to our aches and pains we have to suffer unrelieved. In addition to having 'fits,' when shedding its first teeth, a kitten often starves to death from lack of food that it can chew, and is lucky if it is not thrown out of doors for some dog to torture. When it flattens out on the floor upon its little stomach with the colic or whirls around in a dizzy spell, it is treated as if it had committed the worst of crimes. There is within the range of my acquaintance a little waif kitten, whose story may soon come before us, that has been sick for some weeks from the various causes mentioned. Its protector takes it in her arms and holds it tightly when it begins to suffer, and it has learned to crawl to her upon the approach of its dreadful sensations and curl tightly in her arms, with its head and eyes hidden. Who knows what its torments are, or how great the comfort secured by the protecting arms? Of course, I remember the feeling of restfulness and security I experienced when the need and relief were mine, and I

can sympathize with the little trembling waif.

"If mankind could only realize that words of sympathy were not wasted upon us, our lot would be happier. Every unkind word or act sinks deep into our hearts, and makes its mark for all time upon our lives.

"I sometimes think part of our mission here is to test human beings' hearts. My mistress says she is afraid of people who do not like cats, she always discovers something false about them. I do not believe there is a race that is as domestic as ours, and appreciates love and cuddling as much; our soft, sleepy purr which comes so readily with contentment ought to be sufficient assurance of that. But,

pussy cats assembled, I am afraid you will think I am rambling and at the same time intrenching upon the ground that can be more ably covered by others. Our deliberations will doubtless bring out many points concerning which each will be requested to give his experience, and this doubtless will cover ground enough to form a substantial foundation for our resolutions. I gladly yield the floor to another."

"I am sure," said Romeo, "that we are glad, Mr. President, to hear you discuss the subject from your point of observation, and think you are a broad philosopher, even if you are not a sufferer. Yours is an exhibition of what a pleasant life may be. We have one in the room whose story is far different. It was with great difficulty that I persuaded him to be one of us to-day, and to give us his experience. May I ask the President to call upon 'Polly Wog,' for his story?"

"Will Polly Wog be good enough to give us the story of his life," said the President kindly.

All eyes were turned upon poor Polly Wog. He was intended to be gray, but so unkindly had fortune dealt with him that his color was difficult to determine. His fur was in ragged patches, one eye was entirely gone, he was thin, his legs were crooked, his ears were in shreds, and he seemed all angles.

At the first sound of his voice an audible snicker went around the room, but our kind President cast a reproving glance, and just then managed to tumble from the rostrum to give us some cause for laughing, and after that we were able to control ourselves.

Polly Wog had been hunted and kicked all his life; he never knew what comfort was. His voice was made up of squeaks and moans. It really would have been funny had it not been so mournful. Just as we were ready to shed tears over his misfortunes, his voice would quaver off into two discordant tones, he would give a fishy wriggle, thrust his head forward, and suddenly stop—it might be in the middle of a sentence or the middle of a word. Then he would sit in an upright position, his eyelids would droop, and he would remain perfectly quiet in the repose of despair, until, without premonitory movement, he would open his mouth and commence again in the most monotonous, joy-banishing tone I ever heard. What most amused us was that Polly Wog never was any more disconcerted by these enforced pauses than he would have been if simply making a comma for breath.

This is his story:

"I don't know where I was born, but the first thing I can remember is that my mother tried to keep me under an old board by the corner of a barn, for she said boys and dogs

had killed all of my brothers and sisters. I asked her 'what for,' and she said she did not know. She said she was sorry she was ever born, and she often thought if she only knew how suddenly to stop living she would do so. Sometimes she would say she guessed she was always alive, and never would die. Mother was just a common little gray cat like me, but she had two eyes, and you see I have only one. I have been nearly killed so many times I look upon the matter as almost an every-day occurrence. Mother had just commenced to teach me to catch mice, and one day I had run a little farther away from home than usual, when mother rushed up and said:

"'Quick, now! Get under the barn; there are some boys and a dog!'

"I rushed into a little place just big enough for myself alone, and mother would not leave me until she saw that I was safe, and before she could find a shelter, oh! my! a snarling, snapping, wolfish dog grabbed her in his jaws, and I heard him crunching her poor bones. Oh! how poor mother did scream! I cried, but only mother heard me, and she managed to scream out so that I could understand, 'Keep still!' So I dared not say anything more. But when mother was almost dead and could not move the boys lifted her on a stick and threw her at each other, and after they tired of that they threw stones at her, then after a while

they went away, letting poor mother lie where the wagons going through the alley would run over her.

"I tell you what it is, I wouldn't be good-looking and happy if I could. I should hate myself to think I ever could be happy after I saw my mother suffer like that. I am glad I have only one eye, and that the other one runs, and that my voice is cracked, and that nobody pets me. I don't want anything that is made in the shape of a human being to touch me. If I should live a thousand years I could see those boys throwing my mother around, and I can tell you I think my mother had more soul than all of them put together."

Of course, before Polly Wog got to this point we were all crying, and we thought we could never do enough for him, but we did not see how we could help him, for he resented anything comfortable or pleasant as something he had no right to.

Polly Wog continued: "When all had gone I crept out to mother and licked her all over, to see if I could wake her up; she just moaned a little. Then I tried to drag her out of the way so she could not be run over, when I heard a little girl say:

" 'Oh! see that nasty little kitten trying to eat that dead cat.'

"Then I ran away. Presently a rough-looking man came along and kicked the 'dead cat' right toward the barn, then with another kick

he sent her right under our board, and, apparently not knowing anything more to do in that line, he walked on. Well, anyway, I was glad she was where no one could see her poor limp body, and I sat down beside her and watched, and I managed after a while to catch some mice, and I brought them to her as she used to bring to me, but I never could make her eat."

Then Polly Wog had a little choking spell, and I guess that was what ailed all of us for several minutes.

"By and by," Polly Wog resumed, "she sort of dropped to pieces, and I heard people, as they passed, say:

"'My! what a smell!'

"But I did not care, I wish the smell had been bad enough to kill them. I wish everybody would die, and when I die I hope it will be just as my poor mother died. I want to suffer just as she did."

"Poor Polly Wog," said Muggins.

"No, I don't want any sympathy," interrupted Polly Wog. "My poor mother had none. Well, I lived around our barn until there was not a scrap of mother left. I was thankful there was nothing for men, boys, and dogs to vent their spite upon. I was getting to be quite a cat, and other cats would come and fight with me, and I presume we did make a noise; so one day the woman that resided in

the house to which the barn belonged came out and laid some splendid-looking pieces of meat right down where I could see them. I never had a real nice piece of meat besides mice and rats, for I had eaten only scraps I had found in the garbage barrel, and I wondered what had come over that woman to be so kind, and was half-minded to go out and make friends with her, thinking, perhaps, it would be worth while to try to be cheerful, but then I heard her say:

" 'There, when that cat gets a good dose of arsenic, I guess he won't fight around here much more.'

"Then I knew what she was doing. She had poisoned the meat. I was greatly tempted to eat it and have a good, full, satisfied stomach for once, and die and be done with it, but I concluded I would not accommodate her so much, so I just walked away, roaming I did not care where, and brought up in a woodshed. I afterward heard from a cat living in the neighborhood that the would-be poisoner said:

" 'I have finished up one cat. I put poisoned meat out and have seen nothing more of it. I presume it has crawled away and died.'

"Human beings tell about animals 'crawling away and dying,' when really the animals know all about the intentions regarding them, and go away but don't die, not that time, at least.

"Well, it was cold weather," continued Polly Wog, "and in the woodshed I curled up in a corner as tightly as I could. I was close to a stick of wood, and I had warmed the spot until I was not shivering, when something happened that made me jump, frightened almost to death, and there was a big boy pointing a revolver at me. He had shot once and had not hit me, but I did not know whether I was living or dead; all I knew was that I was scrambling to get away, and when I got into the street I ran and ran, not knowing where I was going. I was so frightened that I ran right into a house, and there I met with one of my most serious troubles. Immediately upon my entrance you would have thought that I was a drove of wolves come to destroy a big strong man and his equally big strong family. The man picked up a poker and began striking at me. The woman used a chair to beat me, and, of course, I slipped around pretty fast. I was almost out of my poor little senses by this time, and I did not know where I was going, and they all screamed:

" 'Oh! He's a mad cat!"

"If they had said 'crazy' cat, they would

have been correct. The first thing I knew the man struck me with the point of the poker right in the eye. Well, of course, you don't want me to tell you of the horror of that hurt. I felt myself lifted up by that reeking eye.

"The woman shouted: 'Run to the alley with it!'

"I knew I was being borne along and then hurled through the air, and then I came down so hard upon the stony ground that I lay stunned for a long time. For a while after I recovered my senses I could not move, and men, driving by on a wagon, said:

" 'There's a dead cat,' and the stinging end of a whip lash sank into my hip and took a piece out. Night came on at last, and in the darkness I managed to crawl under a floor, and there I lay perfectly still, I can't tell how long. I hoped time and again that I would stop living, but I just existed in awful torture. Sometimes I must have lain unconscious for nearly or quite twenty-four hours—for I would hear the children come home from school at night, then sink away and know nothing until I heard them coming the next night. At last the pain left my hurts, but I was so weak that I could move only a few inches at a time, but by so doing I managed to reach the garbage barrel. The cook had dropped some bread and meat by the side of the barrel, and you don't know how good they

tasted. I must have been without food eight or nine days. I was pretty nearly starved, but I was thankful I had found even a hole to rest in, and I crawled back there and remained quiet all day, coming out only at night. I used to wish there never was such a thing as day in the world. Then was when I was troubled. When it was light, men, boys, and dogs were on the street and in the alleys. Sometimes in the night men were prowling around, and sometimes I knew they were dreadful men, but they seemed to have something more on their minds than torturing cats.

"Gradually I improved and became more nearly comfortable. I hoped I would not have to leave my quarters, but I will tell you presently how man's ingratitude caused me to do so.

"There was a very nice pair of horses kept in the barn under which I lay; one was called Pochahontas and the other Bessie. In the night, when the horses were quiet and there was no danger of any one coming out, I used to creep into the barn and catch the mice, and once, when I lay under the barn, I heard the coachman say to a caller:

" 'I keep everything so tight and nice here no mice get in at all.'

" 'You are very lucky,' I heard him answered once, 'if you can get along so easily without a cat. We have two famous fellows

in our barn, they clear out the mice finely and are lots of company. They go in the house and anywhere and are as sleek and fat as you please.'

"'We don't need any cat here, and haven't any,' said the old blow-hard that attended to our barn. 'I can manage the mice. There is a rusty old specimen of a cat here somewhere, but I'll shoot it some day, for it hain't no use.'

"'Don't you be so sure of that,' replied the other voice. 'I'll bet it's the cat and not your care that keeps the mice away. You don't catch me killing a cat, I think too much of them.'

"I really should like to have seen that man's face to learn how he looked.

"Then the man that belonged to our barn responded in a coarse voice:

"'Ho, ho, I'd as soon kill a cat as to eat.'

"'Well,' returned the stranger, 'if you are cruel to one animal you'll be cruel to another, and that accounts for the sore lumps on your horses' shoulders.'

"Our man did not reply to that, and I made up my mind the visitor was some one he did not care to offend.

"I guess he learned afterward whether or not I kept the mice away, for as I shall tell you, I soon left. That was the only place where I felt companionship. The horses used

to like to have me around. In the dark I could hear them 'sniffing,' and I would jump up on the manger, and they would rub their noses upon me and I would smooth myself against them, and in the early morning of the summer-time I would see them watching me, and then, when I caught a mouse, they would whinny a little, nod their heads, paw gently with their forefeet, and keep their eyes upon me and look interested until I had eaten the mouse all up. I always used to eat near them when there was no danger. Many a cold night I have lain right on the horses, and I learned how to stay on, even when they were getting up. Of course, I used to listen to find out when any one came, because I should probably have been tortured to death had I been caught.

"Well, once when the roosters had just ceased crowing for midnight, I heard stealthy steps approaching, and, of course, I scrambled away as fast as possible, but as I ran toward my usual exit I found myself nearer the coming footsteps. They ceased, and, listening to find out which way to go, I heard, through a crack in the barn, some whispering, and this was the conversation:

"'Pal, no mistake now where the boodle's kep'?'

"'Naw, do you take me for a fool?'

"'If any lark peeps shut him up. If you can't do't one way do't another. Knife safe?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Gun's too loud.'

"Well, you may be sure I was all of a tremble. I realized these were burglars. I had heard stable boys tell any amount of blood-curdling stories about them. I knew the people who owned the barn where I stole my shelter were very wealthy. I believed the house was to be robbed, and by men of the most desperate character. I presume, in accordance with my general feelings, I ought to have let the whole matter alone. If it had been only the stableman who was to suffer he might have suffered for all of me, but I knew there were others in the house, who might possibly be kind-hearted, and so I commenced to think what I could do to spoil their plans.

"The robbers crept nearer and nearer the house; they kept in the shadow of the buildings as nearly as possible, and went to a kitchen window, so I slipped under some steps near by, and sent up the most unearthly howls I was capable of. One man swore and said:

" 'That cat'll wake the town.'

" 'Can't yuh stick it?'

"But I did not wait for that; I ran to another hiding place, and there I howled and wailed. Presently the very door before which the burglars was standing flew open, and out rushed the stableman with a cocked revolver, saying as he came:

" 'I'll fix you this time.'

"Well, the stableman had been so still and so sly in order to catch me, the house breakers had not heard him, and the revolver was right in the face of one of them before he realized what had happened. The robbers dropped everything and ran with the shots that had been intended for me following after them. One man fell and proved to be a desperate character. He and his companion were both caught and sent to the penitentiary for several years. The next day I heard talking in the barn, and Martin, one of the sons of the household, said:

" 'Well, we ought to bless a cat fight for once. Those fellows meant mischief by their commencement on the window and door and the tools and the weapons they dropped. If it's the shocking old cat I've seen around here I should be for feeding it up for pay.'

" 'Don't give that cat any credit for it,' said the coachman. 'You don't suppose that animal made all of that noise to wake you up, do you? Not smart enough for that. I'll make way with him the first chance I get.'

" 'Martin is a little sentimental on the animal question,' said another brother.

" 'Well, we had a close call from two of the worst desperadoes loose, and nothing saved us but those enterprising yowls. I would like to see the cat, anyway,' continued Martin.

SKOWHEGAN, WILL CARLETON'S CAT

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"'Aw,' said the coachman, 'you don't know what cat it was. It might have come from blocks away.'

"'That is true,' said Martin, and there the conversation ceased.

"Later in the day I heard the coachman, speaking to another man, say:

"'Let's get Ferguson's dogs and send them under the barn after that old cat, and see how quick they'll kill it.'

"I did not wait for their fun. I slipped out as quietly as I could and ran down the alley. Just then they spied me and one of them sent a stone after me, that I thought broke my leg. I had to run on three feet, and how they did shout and laugh. I found at last a corner under a sidewalk, and I managed to get into a

small hole, so small that I knew no one could get me, and there I lay with no desire but to get rest for my leg, which was making me almost crazy with pain. But it did not kill me, oh, of course, not. I just kept on living and suffering. It was a long time before I was able to get out and hunt some scraps of food. The only place where I feel at all safe is that little spot under the sidewalk, and that is the only home that I have.

"You see I am frozen all to pieces. You could hardly find a homelier animal than I am. I never had a human hand laid on me in tenderness. I never was spoken to other than in a voice of scorn and anger. I never had food given me intentionally. I never had a drink of nice sweet milk but twice, and then it was put out for another cat, and I stole it. I never had any friends except Pocahontas and Bessie, and I believe if their food had been such that I could have eaten they would have shared it with me.

"I don't expect any kindness from human beings. I don't want any. My life is simply an aimless existence, consisting mostly of an involuntary struggle to live, just as one's eyelids close when the eye is in danger.

"Kindness would surprise and puzzle me. I would not know how to act. I am willing to suffer just as my poor mother suffered, and to die just as she died. I feel impelled to realize

all of her agony, and draw my latest breath in the same cruel terror. To *perdition* with humanity, I say!"

There was not a voice raised against the poor sufferer's condemnation. His lot had been hard; misjudged, abused, fretted, worried, hunted, tortured all of his life.

We were in no mood to hear any more and adjourned, silently and thoughtfully wending our separate ways homeward.

END OF FIRST DAY.

SECOND DAY.

After a brief report of the preceding day had been read and approved, the President asked if the Advisory Board had anything to report, whereupon Taciturn arose, and, without any preliminary remarks, went directly to the heart of the business.

"Mr. President," said he, "as chairman of the Advisory Board, I am happy to announce that the board has chosen to present to this convention for acceptance as Committee upon Resolutions the names of Bonnie, Turvey, and Polly Wog."

"Mr. President," said Polly Wog immediately, "I must decline, for I know nothing about anything that would be of assistance in forming these resolutions. I have no education, and never have lived with educated people. I don't know that I want our miseries lightened. I would not lift my toenail to be happy. I don't want to know what comfort is, and you see I am not the one to aid in this business."

"Brother Polly Wog," said our President, "we should be glad of your assistance in this most important matter, for your experience in suffering has been so great you can suggest many things of which others may not think."

"Mr. President, there would be only one suggestion which I could make," responded Polly Wog, "and it would have to be a minority report."

"Mr. President," said Katrina, rising gracefully, "if in order, may I ask Polly Wog what that one suggestion is that he would make? Perhaps it can be agreed to in general convention, or, at least, an expression upon it may be given."

"Brother Polly Wog," said the President, "we are here for the good of our kind, and no valuable suggestion should be lost. While it may not be according to strict parliamentary rules to ask for that suggestion here and now, we shall be glad to learn and pass our opinions upon the merits of the suggestion, if you are willing to make it before the convention. Are you willing?"

"Certainly," moaned Polly Wog, between a squeak and a groan. "It is simply this, and nothing more; I would hang all the men, burn all the women, drown all the babies, and smash all the dogs."

Well, the cats couldn't help but laugh. At

the same time we remembered the tortures that had so embittered Polly Wog, and we wanted to cry, too. There was so much noise that the President feared our meeting would be discovered and called "Order!"

Polly Wog's sally was greeted with cries of "That's so;" "I agree with you;" "Hit them again;" "Oh, not all."

"I know some good people," said Johnny Bear."

"I know a pretty good dog," said Buster.

"I know a nice little girl," said Eulalie.

"I know perfectly lovely good people," said George.

"Oh, my mathter ith jutht too sweet for anything," lisped Maida. "He buyth me liver, and petth me and putth his nothe on my nothe and callth me pet nameths. I don't want *him* hung. I don't care much if my mithtreth ith burnt, for the always turnth me out in the cold kitchen, and takth the food away from me, cawth theeth got a little thore-eyed dog. I don't thee the uthe of thore-eyed dogth, either."

"Oh, I don't want our baby drowned," said Fiddle; "he lays his soft little face against mine and says: 'Kichie, Kichie, pitty Kichie,' and I sleep in the crib with him. He is never the least bit rough with me, and I am afraid if any one came to hurt our baby I would scratch whoever came. But then," he added,

"I don't blame Polly Wog for his opinion, he doesn't know our baby."

"Well, that just proves what I say," said Romeo, "about the necessity of children being taught by their parents what cruelty is, to say nothing of knowing what hurts. I heard a lady, not long since, say that it made her shudder now to think of some of the cruelties she witnessed with unconcern when she was a child. She used to think it exceedingly funny to see turtles run when boys put red hot coals on their backs. She wondered why her mother tried to keep boys from indulging in the sport. She also supposed it was proper when a kitten was not wanted to take it off somewhere and drop it by somebody's door or into the woods and leave it to shift for itself. The ideas of right and wrong are very faint in the minds of untaught human beings. Human beings untaught would be lower in the scale of animal kind than we are."

"Perhaps we would better proceed," said the President, "to the regular order of business, which is the consideration of the names presented by the Advisory Board. Am I to understand, Brother Polly Wog, that you must absolutely refuse to act upon the Committee of Resolutions?"

"With many thanks for the kindness meant, I must decline, Mr. President," said Polly Wog, with unexpected politeness.

"Have you any name to suggest in place of Polly Wog, Mr. Chairman of the Advisory Broad?" said the President.

"The first name upon our list to fill vacancies, Mr. President," said Taciturn, "is that of Muggins."

At this Muggins arose, and, making a polite bow in the direction of the sister cats, said:

"Mr. President, the most serious and really the only plausible objection I have to accepting the honor so graciously tendered is my positive and unremovable decision, that a mother cat should constitute the third member of the Committee upon Resolutions."

"Make a motion to that effect," volunteered Bonnie.

"Will it be in accordance with the order of procedure, Mr. President?" queried Muggins, who was very punctilious.

"I think so," said Starlight.

"Then I move, Mr. President," said Muggins, "that the third member of the board be chosen from the sex noted for the high development of its intuitive, and perceptive faculties, denominated the female sex."

"I second the motion," said Turvey.

Of course the motion was carried, and the Advisory Board being immediately excused to consider names, a desultory conversation was

carried on, in which many little grievances were detailed.

The board was not long from the room, and immediately upon its return Taciturn reported as follows:

"It is not often, Mr. President, that we are fortunate enough to present such a distinguished name in a convention as that which I have the honor of presenting this morning. The lovely puss I am to name is distinguished in many ways. In one line her recorded pedigree as a full-blooded Angora runs back through many generations. She has had her photograph taken for the public several times, and at the St. Louis Fair her portrait painted in oil colors attracted much attention. She has been well and favorably noted in the press of her adopted town, is owned by literary and artistic people, and has every advantage of culture and gentle care to make her give tone to our deliberations. From this description it hardly becomes necessary to give the name, although to be in order I shall do so, Mr. President. I am proud to name Dolly Varden."

Little Topaz seconded the nomination, and, of course, there was not a dissenting vote, and Dolly Varden was declared unanimously nominated to the third place upon the committee.

Dolly Varden was a beauty and had received much admiration since coming to the conven-

tion. She was a brilliant "tortoise shell" cat. Her orange color, her black and white spots were clear, bright, and shining like satin. She was immaculately clean, and if any one touched her fur in the least degree she turned instantly to dress it over. Her dishes had to be positively clean, and if a piece of her food touched the floor she would not eat it.

All of the time that Taciturn was talking Dolly Varden sat "kneading bread" with her pretty white feet, and when it came time to accept, she said:

"Mr. President, I thank the Advisory Board for nominating me, and, if elected, I shall fill the position named to the best of my ability."

She said no more than absolutely necessary, but she looked so pretty that we felt we were to have a distinguished Committee upon Resolutions—one that would carry weight in the presentation of the Resolutions from which we hoped so much.

Although Topaz was very young, he was a distinguished animal of well-known Angora parentage, but he was very delicate in health, and Dolly Varden had paid him much attention, so, although very young, Topaz realized what honors meant, and was delighted at the

position assigned to Dolly Varden. The cats had the same home, and nothing in the house was considered too good for them. They were good friends, although when Topaz first came to her home Dolly Varden was backward about sharing the love of her people with him. However, she found there was love enough for all, and she became reconciled.

"Now, read again the names as you have them, Taciturn," said the President.

"Bonnie, Turvey, and Dolly Varden," read Taciturn.

"I move that we vote collectively," said Pretty, a slow-moving, large, fine-looking orange cat.

The convention adopted the suggestion.

"I move they be accepted, every one," said Josephine. She felt that her voice was called for on this occasion, and she wanted to show that she was not jealous of Dolly Varden. Josephine herself, although an ordinary gray cat, was eminently worthy of notice. She had raised several large families, and her kittens were always so pretty and smart they were in demand, with plenty of good homes waiting for them.

"I second the motion," said Queenie, who, as the mother of Plato and Columbus, had attained distinction in the cat world and the world at large.

It is needless to say that the committee, as read, was accepted unanimously, and the newly

elected members made pretty little speeches of acceptance.

As usual, Dolly Varden was brief but to the point. "I thank you for the honor," said she, "for I know it will please my mistress very much."

Bonnie was a pure white, fine-looking cat, but excessively retiring. He was, however, very observing and knew whom to trust. The greatest trial of his later life was when his people took him camping. He never felt safe then except when his people were holding him, and at night his mistress slept with his leading string tied to her wrist, in order to be sure of knowing his whereabouts at any minute. He was quiet, but it was known that he thought deeply and seriously.

In accepting, he said: "Many of the brothers could have filled the place with more ability, but none could have recognized more surely the necessity for this convention. I have seen enough suffering by cats of all degrees to cause me to be glad to make the attempt, at least, to aid in their betterment. Perhaps those of you who know of my present home do not realize that I was a waif, and that I hung around several houses until I was over a year old, always being kicked out. At last a family moved into one of the houses and accepted me, and you may be sure I was thankful to have plenty to eat, a warm place to sleep, and, most of all,

love and kindness. I did object to camping, as some of you know, but if any one had been homeless as I had, for any length of time, he would be terrified with any semblance of a change in home. The alley experiences of my younger days are all I need to cause me to give this convention the best of my time and ability. I do not have to be in the house all of the time, and, therefore, ought to be able to be a constant attendant at these meetings. I thank you for this expression of confidence."

Turvey accepted in polite and thoughtful terms.

"We all agree," said the President, "that we have a good committee, and if we were not sure before of the intelligence of our members we now have ample evidence of it. You will remember," he continued, "that you have voted that the committee shall not frame its resolutions until near the close of our convention, which may last some weeks, or perhaps, months. That being the case, we have nothing to do, but to continue with our stories—pleasant and otherwise. This is the instruction our committee asks, and I beg our talks may be to the point, and that we try to cover the ground in order to bring everything of note to the attention of the convention. The members of the committee will doubtless take notes and be prepared at all points when the time comes for framing the resolutions. I would suggest

that a position near your President and Secretary be taken by the members of the committee, that any communication with them and with each other may render easy the accomplishment of their task."

Right here Dolly Varden, who seemed to have any amount of aristocratic connections, very quietly claimed the attention of the convention by presenting for inspection a beautiful photograph of the famous Maid of Avenal of Argyle. We were perfectly delighted with it, and concluded she was well worth the fabulous price at which she was held. She looked like a gentle and kind cat, too, and she sent word that she would like very much to attend our convention, but her distance from our town would prevent. She, however, sent us her good wishes, and we returned the compliment, and thanked Dolly Varden for showing us the picture.

After due interchange of greetings, the committee became quiet in the positions designated.

"It remains now for us to continue our experiences," said the President.

Immediately there were loud calls for "Scrubby."

The President arose and said:

"If our friend 'Scrubby,' or 'Smiley,' as I like to call him, is in the house, will he be kind enough to give us the story of his life?"

Scrubby was the joke of the convention.

For obvious reasons, which will appear later, his owner often called him "The Tramp."

In deference to our President's wishes I shall call him "Smiley." Well, Smiley was gray, striped with black, and was very short and fat. His tail was only a third of its natural length, with the hair always standing out as if he were ready for combat. Both ears had been torn until they were fringed, and some of the fringes pointed one way, some another. His fur never was smooth, but stood in little tags all over, just in the way some artists paint cat's fur, because they can't paint it in the right way. His eyes were big and bright, encircled by a black rim which gave them an especially wide-awake look, and his mouth was open most of the time with his tongue hanging out, like that of a good-natured dog. The last named peculiarity gave him the name of "Smiley."

He was always welcome, and even the worst enemy of cats could not accuse him of being sly. He was very comfortably situated, and did not care what name he was called; but he had not always been so happy.

This is Smiley's story:

"I was one of five kittens," said he, "and our owners were dreadfully poor, but the little children begged so hard for us to be kept to

play with that our lives were spared for continued torture. I do say, deliver me mostly from little children. Their liking for us is, to us, a very painful kind of liking. Before my eyes were opened I could feel myself dragged around. In fact, the dragging around commenced so early in life that I supposed that was the general condition of everybody. My tail was broken in two places before I was a month old. I was the one kitten that was deemed especially worthless, and, whenever I made my appearance, I was greeted with shouts of laughter because of the kinks in my tail and my rumpled look. I think my hair started to grow the wrong way when I was a baby, from the cruel banging around that I had, for, dress it as much as I please, it will not lie down. I have had the life nearly crushed out of me more times than I can name. The favorite pastime of the children used to be to lie down upon me. I think, had I been fat, I would have been killed, but, fortunately, it was a good deal like lying upon a sheet of paper, and my heart and lungs never seemed to have a chance to grow very big. I think the mother that gives a soft little innocent kitten to a baby to pull and pinch, slap, bang, and lie down upon, need never be surprised if in after years her children walk in ways that lead to the penitentiary——"

"May I interrupt?" asked George.

"With Smiley's permission," said the President.

Smiley very graciously consented, and George said:

"I want to remark, Mr. President, that such treatment is not confined to the families of the poor, for I have seen it in many places. There are people who think cats have no feeling, and that it is perfectly proper to abuse them all one pleases, if it simply 'amuses the baby.' I knew one family where no kitten could live longer than three or four weeks."

There arose such a general desire to speak on this subject that our President thought best to say:

"As this subject is of so much importance, I suggest that we defer until another time its consideration, and listen now to the remainder of Smiley's story."

Then the speaker continued:

"After a while," said he, "I learned that I was to be disposed of somehow, and the discussion arose as to the manner of my taking off. Some said, 'Tie a stone to his neck, and throw him in the river.' You may be sure I was frightened, and what I would have done, had I had strength and time to do it, I do not know. I had got pretty weak and every one was calling me a 'nasty sick kitten,' and I could hardly drag myself around.

"Almost immediately after the drowning

suggestion, the man of the house said to one of the larger boys: 'Jim, I'll give you a nickel if you'll take that sick kitten down to the river and drown him!'

" 'Done,' said Jim, and he caught me up before I had time to think, and away we went.

He did not hurt me as he carried me, and presently I heard him say:

" 'I ain't a-goin' to kill no cat for nobody, but I don't know what to do with it. Such a poor little thing, too, with its life all kicked out of it. It never did have enough to eat, and it can't get enough now, unless some one will take care of it. It's too little and weak to help itself.'

"Really, I never knew Jim had so much heart, and it was a great relief to me, for I had no strength to scramble away from him. I just thought I would take what came. I saw no river, so I concluded that Jim was taking me to a more thickly populated part of the city. Presently we came to a nice-looking house where a short, good-natured-looking lady was standing in the door, and she did look as if she would not like to see anything suffer, and Jim said:

" 'There, I believe that lady will give this poor little rag something to eat.'

"Just then the lady turned to enter the house,

and Jim poked me through the fence and ran away. I was sorry then to part with Jim, for he had been holding me gently, and in our walk, which had lasted half an hour, I had learned to like him. Poor fellow, when he went back I suppose he had to tell a lie and say that I was drowned——"

"'No, he didn't,' here interrupted a little black cat. 'My name is Dora, and I am your sister, but I didn't know it until just now. Jim told all about it when he came home, and he wouldn't take the five cents, either, and he hung around until he saw the lady take you in the house.'

"'Well, well, Dora, is that you?" said Smiley; 'I wouldn't have known you. You look well.'

"Yes, I'm pretty comfortable. After Jim came home he said he'd seen enough of the kittens being abused, and he'd take the chances of their being better treated where there were not so many children. I don't know where he took Joe-Bob, Leon, and So-So, but he took me off one day and gave me to a pretty good family, where I have plenty to eat, but not as much petting as I should like, and as I see you have by your expression."

"I am glad you have a good home," said Smiley; "come and see me some day."

"I shall," said Dora. "Pardon the interruption."

"Only too happy for the interruption, I am sure," said Smiley, smiling more broadly than before. "Well, then, to continue; after Jim left me and the lady entered the house, I crouched down by the fence for a while, and then I thought I would see if I could possibly make my own way, and I went to the door and huddled my little cold feet under me. Then I mewed a little, then I mewed louder, then I kept on mewing. Presently the door opened again, and the plump lady appeared, and, looking down at me, said:

" 'Why, you forlorn, scrubby midget. Why, you poor little thing, a breath would blow you away. Well, well, I suppose I ought to send you off.'

"Then I looked her right in the face, and I suppose I mewed just as I felt, for she said:

" 'What a piteous mew! You poor little thing! Some one has thrown you in here, and you shall have one good meal if you never have another one, and be nice and warm and rested.'

"And then I stood up and rubbed against her dress, and she said:

" 'My! what a tail! Is it a brush heap or a study of angles?'

"Then she stooped down and picked me up, and oh, how nice and soft and warm her hands were! Then she took me into the house, and,

dear me! I could have lain down and died in comfort, everything was so clean and cozy and soft and warm."

"Then she took me through into the kitchen, where there was a clean painted floor, and said:

" 'Nora, bring me some milk. Here is a little waif.'

"Nora was a big, broad-faced Irish girl.

" 'Oh, it's always finding waifs ye are,' she said, 'and I don't see how ye are goin' to keep thim all, I don't know. Ye've two tramp cats now.'

" 'Well,' said my lady, 'we shall make this forlorn bit comfortable, now. See its ragged ears, its broken tail, and its bones ready to prick through the skin. Now, warm the milk a little, Nora.'

"Then in a minute a clean, white saucer of milk was put on the floor under my nose, and I never will forget how good it tasted. I just had to stop and rub against my lady and lick her hand.

" 'What an affectionate little puss!' she said. 'You know when you are well treated, don't you?'

" 'It manes good luck, mum, you know,' said Nora. 'It's a dretful poor little body.'

" 'Oh, you're all right, Nora. You don't

want anything to suffer,' said my lady, for she saw Nora was softening toward me.

" 'Phwat kind of a tail do you call it, mum?' asked Nora.

" 'I think I should call it a geometrical tail,' said my lady, 'it has plenty of angles. Dear me, I don't believe the little thing weighs over two ounces. I don't see where it has a place big enough for a heart.'

"I drank every drop of that milk.

" 'Now give us some more warm milk, Nora, and some meat cut fine,' said my lady. 'I'm going to feed this little animal all it wants once, anyway.'

"And she did. I never will forget the taste of that meat and how my teeth sank into it. Woo-oo-oow! I was really satisfied. I washed my face and bathed all over, and my lady laughed and said:

" 'Poor Scrubby, you never can be good-looking, except in your bright eyes.'

"I think I commenced my habit of smiling right then and there, for, as she talked, I looked at her with my mouth open and my tongue hanging out, and she said: 'Well, he is cute, anyhow. Look at that little pink tongue. He is a good listener.'

"She would just touch my tongue with the tip of her finger, and the more she touched me the better I liked it, so I got in the habit of hanging it out all ready.

WHEN MY MISTRESS IS AWAY FROM HOME

WHEN MY MISTRESS IS AT HOME

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"After a while my lady said:

" 'Let poor little Scrubby lie here under the stove a while. I shall come back and see what we shall do with him.'

"But I tell you, pussy cats assembled, I did not care to lose sight of such a friend as that, and, when she started for the other room, I started, too, and kept right against her. Then they both laughed, and Nora said:

" 'There's good luck for you sure, mum; all you do with that cat in the house will be in good luck.'

" 'Why, you little thing,' said my lady, 'you certainly ought to be petted, such an affectionate little midget as you are. I guess you are big enough to have a heart. Come right along. Let us see if he will follow me.'

"You would better believe I did trot right along and close to her until she sat down in the sitting room, where the carpet was so soft I did not know at first what I was walking on, and where pretty flowers and sunlight and warmth were lovelier than the whole world.

" 'Now, we will let you do just what you wish,' said my lady, 'and see what it will be.'

"Of course, I jumped into her lap, that was exactly what I thought I wanted to do all of the time, and I cuddled down the happiest cat in the whole world. The last thing I knew I heard her say:

" 'Well, there is one little thing happy in this

world. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these ye have done it unto me." '

'How long I slept I do not know, but suddenly some one touched me, and I jumped and sprang to get away, for I forgot where I was, and thought it was going to be the same old hurt, but a soft hand came down upon me and a gentle voice said:

" 'There, little Dot, don't be so frightened, I guess you are not in the habit of having even decent treatment.'

"Then I knew where I was, and I felt so good I commenced to work my paws and something commenced to rattle in my throat. I did not know at first what it was, but my lady said:

" 'Really, I believe the midget never has known how to purr and is making its first attempt.'

"Then I heard another voice, and I jumped again, but my lady smoothed me gently, and said: 'Now, don't be frightened, you poor little tramp.'

"Then I tried hard not to be, but there was a great big man looking down at me, and I looked straight up at him, wondering what he was going to do with me.

" 'Well, Margy,' said he, 'if you haven't another tramp cat to take care of! What do you intend doing with that forlorn bit of a scare-

crow? I should think he was halt, lame, and bruised.'

"'He is all of that,' answered my lady, 'but see his bright eyes! I guess I'll keep him.'

"And oh, oh, oh, how happy I was at that. I tried to look her hard enough in the eyes to tell her so. I worked my paws and the rattle came again in my throat.

"'I believe it knows what I am saying,' said my lady.

"I was sure *I* knew, and I knew by this time what it all meant."

All the cats were so interested in Smiley's story by this time there were many indications of tears and a soft buzzing, as if they were all trying to talk away their emotions. But if we were crying, we were crying for joy, and we wished there were two or three millions of "my ladies" in the world.

When we were composed, Smiley continued:

"'Well, Margy,' said her husband—for that was who it was—'you are your own boss, but how will the other two cats and Rover treat him?'

"'Oh, they will have to treat him well; they will learn.'

"Then I thought from my lady's voice that she could be as firm and just as she was gentle and sweet; and I felt perfectly safe.

"That was five years ago. The only pain I have suffered since was the result of an accident. I was sitting near my lady as she sat in a rocking chair sewing, and I was not thinking about my geometrical tail, when down came the rocker, crushing my kinky member flat. Of course, I could not help screaming, and my lady jumped and picked me up, and petted me. There were tears in

her dear eyes, and she said: 'To think that the mistress you came to of your own accord should hurt you, "little sweetness." She's so sorry, so sorry.'

"Then she did all she could to save the poor little tail, but it had to go, and the last two links of my tail were cut off, and I was left with this fuzzy little stump.

" 'Nixie' and 'Spunk,' the other two cats in

the house, and Rover, were early taught to treat me with consideration; but I visit mostly with my lady and with Rover, who has been taught, as any dog may be, to be good to cats.

"I never stay away from my lady a minute longer than necessary, and often she says:

" 'Well, bright eyes, I guess they will have to call us the "inseparables." There never was such a constant companion.'

"I tell you I am so happy I don't wonder they call me Smiley. I know there is not a happier nor a homelier cat in the Republic. With such food as I have, any other cat would have a slick, clean coat. I am clean, but my fur was rubbed the wrong way so much when I was young, and I had such a blighted kitten-hood, I never can be put in shape. My life, however, is just a happy dream; and I don't mind being homely and having a funny tail and ragged ears, for every one says: 'What an odd cat!' People ask my lady if I am not an imported animal, and you will be surprised when I tell you that I have heard people insist that I must be a new and strange variety of cat, and assert their intention of finding one like me.

"Ha, ha! Think of that, you sleek, smooth-eared, long-haired, long-tailed pussies! I am happy in spite of looks."

Of course, we all laughed, but at the same time some of us envied him his lovely mistress,

nice home, and beautiful eyes, and thought that with all of these accompaniments it was not so dreadful to be "odd."

"In conclusion," said Smiley, "let me say we are not here to listen to long stories of happiness, or I could continue indefinitely. I would like to state, as I have once before in my narrative, that my complaint is especially against allowing children to abuse their kitten pets."

There were gentle murmurs of approbation when Smiley ceased, and we were having a quiet little informal conversation, making pleased comments upon the happy ending of all of Smiley's troubles, when we were suddenly interrupted in a manner that will require a little preliminary explanation.

F. O. Fowl is a very wise cat, but possessed of a temper that rather, as Muggins says, "deteriorates from the calmness of his vicinity." His advice is good when not governed by his hot temper, and even then there is most always right on his side.

He is so peculiar his people call him "Fine Old Fowl," which we abbreviated to "F. O. Fowl."

Like most of us, he does not like cold weather, but every night he is banished to the barn. He never suggests bedtime, for the warm house is more to his liking and to his judgment as the proper thing for cats. He

knows there would be trouble for him if he resisted and scratched, so he says nothing until he is rolled out from the apron upon the barn floor, when he stands up and "spits" with all the vigor he can command, as, for communication with human beings, he knows that is the most expressive language he can use.

Not being allowed to eat at table, he signifies his desire for nutriment by tapping with his paw the elbows of the diners. As he is often rewarded for the trick, he does not allow himself to forget it. He has an exceedingly long and large tail, and resents with unnecessary and vigorous eloquence any interference with it, although one would suppose he would be glad to have it attract attention. Also he abhors petting when he is not in the humor for it, and growls with zeal worthy of a better cause when subjected to it. However, he is occasionally so conciliatory as to be forgiven past rudeness, for often, when invited to receive caresses, he rises upon his feet and places both paws in the hands outstretched to him. We believe that, in a large measure, his expression of temper comes from his involuntary resistance to the generally received opinion of the mental and physical status of cats. We would be glad, however, if F. O. Fowl were less inclined to resent supposed infringement upon his rights, because in this effort for the amelioration of the condition of our kind, we

desire to be the cause of no unpleasantness, but to let the blame of our mistreatment rest entirely and justly with human kind. We aim not to be aggressors.

Under all the circumstances we were not unprepared this day to see F. O. Fowl spring into the midst of our assembly, with his long tail three times its usual width, and "spitting" for dear life. He turned toward the door by which he entered, as if he thought some one were following him, and we were really afraid he would explode, he was so mad. His back was all humped and fire seemed to fly from his eyes. A motion from our president gave us to understand we must remain quiet while F. O. Fowl recovered himself.

Gradually some of his vertical fur drooped to horizontal lines, and he said:

"I thought I'd never, *never, never,* NEVER get away. I had to run. They wanted to hold me, and pet me, and show off my long tail. One girl is bound to stroke it and say in baby tongue: 'Se-e what a ni-i-ice lo-o-ong tail our cat's got,' and I don't like it, it makes me mad. Then, too, just as I was ready to come, one young lady was bound to give me my music lesson."

"Music lesson!" said half a dozen voices in different tones of elevation and surprise.

"Ye-e-es, music lesson," snapped F. O. Fowl, drawling out the "yes" unnecessarily and glar-

ing around. "I said 'music lesson' plainly enough, didn't I?"

"Why, yes,; anybody could tell that," cooed Pinkie sweetly.

"If it were on the violin or guitar," croaked Polly Wog, "I suppose you were afraid of hurting some of your ancestors' feelings."

"Ffsst! Ffsst!" said F. O. Fowl. He was a little past words.

"I presume, of course, it was upon the piano," cooed Pinkie again; "most of our owners have pianos, but mine never take enough pains with me to give me music lessons. I wish they would. I know I should like to sing."

"Pains!" snapped F. O. Fowl. "That's just it. I have all the pains and they have all the fun. Any one can take music lessons that wants to. I don't, and that's just the reason that I have to take them. They grab me behind the arms, and told me up to the old piano, and with my paws they pound out 'Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,' or 'Greenville,' and all the time I kick and would scratch if I could, and I yowl and yowl, and the worst of it is they call that 'singing,' and say I'm an opera singer. Then they let me down upon the floor, and I tell them what I think of it. I spit hard enough to put out a furnace fire, and that only makes them laugh the harder, and I tell you I just get madder and madder."

"So it seems," squeaked Polly Wog.

Then F. O. Fowl humped himself, and we all expected trouble, but Pinkie, with a show of sympathetic spirit, said:

"I should think you would be disturbed. I am sure I would not like to be forced to take lessons in that manner, although I still think I should like to be a musician."

Polly Wog turned up his nose a little at Pinkie's conciliatory manœuvres, and remained quietly hovering over his paws, as if it did not amount to anything anyway, and the belligerent cat, after staring hard all around a few minutes, looking to see if there were not something to raise his ire, went over and sat down by Pinkie. The little peacemaker moved one side, to accommodate him, purred to smooth him down, and all was serene again.

It may seem strange that the President did not quickly quiet our turbulent friend with a command for "Order"; that he did not was only another proof of his qualifications for the office he held. After the meeting closed for the day and in private conversation on our way home, I unthinkingly asked him why he had not checked F. O. Fowl.

"For many reasons," said he, "chief among which is that most of us are untrained and untamed. Like uncultivated man, we act our natures. I knew if we gave F. O. Fowl time

enough, he would exhaust his temper for the time being, and if I had checked him we could not tell what would be the result. It is best to remain upon the side that one is sure of, especially when the sure side is one of peace and order."

"Are you not afraid it will make him overbearing," I asked, "and that he will be more apt to exhibit his temper in the future if we are so lenient with him now?"

"No. I think he will, if our meetings are extended enough, gradually compare his actions with those of others and see that he does not appear to advantage."

"Aren't you afraid his example will encourage others to show a like temper?"

"Oh, no!" answered Starlight, laughing. "I think his exhibition of feeling did not enhance him in the estimation of others. He did not seem exactly pretty, and placed himself in a position to be laughed at, which, you know, is not an enviable condition. Neither people nor cats care to be ridiculous, and a mad individual is almost always amusing to people in the ordinary frame of mind. F. O. Fowl is sympathetic and kind, and no one may ask for a better friend than he, when the friendship is deserved."

Just then, from about a block behind us, came a whizzing rush, accompanied by the terrified yelps of a dog and sharp, fizzing sounds,

like the spits of escaping steam from an engine, and instantly two streaks shot past us, which even in that flash we recognized as a big white dog and F. O. Fowl, but the dog was about two steps ahead.

"Yes," said Starlight, laughing, for we were both greatly amused, "F. O. Fowl is rather opposed to dogs."

Here Starlight bade me good-by, and I passed on, curious to know the outcome of F. O. Fowl's exploit. I had not far to go, for about the middle of the next block a white dog with a torn and bleeding ear was crouching behind two women, who were flourishing brooms at our fighting cat.

F. O. Fowl had sense enough to retire, but his explosions of wrath were so vigorous all the way home that I could obtain nothing coherent from his talk except something like this:

"Ffsst! Ffsst! Ffsst! I'll go for that, ffsst! ffsst! dog, every, ffsst! ffsst! time he comes out, for he bit ffsst! ffsst! a sweet little kitten a month ago, ffsst! ffsst! till it couldn't crawl, ffsst! ffsst!"

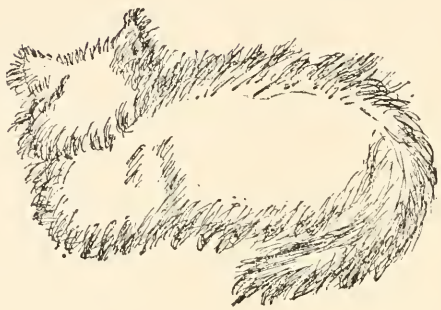
I told you there was always a reason for F. O. Fowl's temper, and when we parted I said:

"Well, F. O. Fowl, you are right in being

angry; it does you credit, but keep on the safe side."

"Ffsst! Ffsst! Safe side be hanged!" he answered.

END OF SECOND DAY.



THIRD DAY.

The interval between our second meeting and our third was one of continual visiting between the cats of the city. Reports were being spread far and wide of our proceedings, and there were noticeable upon the members of our race a more sedate expression and a more dignified carriage.

An eagerness quite in keeping with the importance of our subject prevailed among those already enrolled as members, and a pleased expectancy marked those intending to become so.

As secretary, I may as well say right here that later consideration upon the subject of verbatim reports resulted in omitting uninteresting details. I felt that Muggins would be satisfied if I did not omit *his* speeches, and I have been proceeding according to the method later indicated.

When the day and hour arrived for our third meeting there were many new faces before us, but the bells had long ceased ringing for nine o'clock, and the President's chair was still vacant.

I thought it incumbent upon me to suggest that the meeting proceed, so I said:

"Evidently our President finds his exit from his home prevented by his owners, and I know it would be his wish that we attend to the regular order of the day. He will certainly be with us at the first opportunity, for he considers the breaking of his word entirely foreign to his principles. I therefore move that Taciturn be elected President pro tem."

Josephine seconded my motion, and, all assenting, Taciturn mounted the rostrum.

"I thank you," said he, "for the honor conferred upon me, and now ask if there are any suggestions regarding the order of our proceedings? Shall we commence with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting?"

"It occurs to me, Mr. President," said Muggins, rising, "that this would be a good time to hear the history of our President. Those of us who know him would like to have the other members of the convention become acquainted

with the character of our leader, and some of his lovable traits, and one of our number has been so situated as to hear and know about him. Starlight is altogether too modest to tell his own good qualities, his memory, and so forth, and should he approach during the relation thereof, we can cease conversing upon that subject and change to another. It will be something in the line of deception, of course, but under the circumstances perfectly excusable. I move that Dolly Varden be asked to relate the story of Starlight."

This was immediately acted upon, and our beautiful belle took the place assigned her upon the floor. She was perfectly unassuming, and so oblivious of self that she might have been talking from behind a veil, from all indication she gave of a realization of her own beauty. Her tale, therefore, was simply and effectively told.

"I should have been glad," said she, "if some one with a wiser head than mine had been proposed to relate the anticipated story, but cheerfully comply with your request, for I presume that I am more familiar with the subject than any one here.

"Starlight was born in a small but charming city upon the banks of the Thames River, in Connecticut. His beautiful Angora mother came over the sea, and when Starlight was about two months old he was given to his pres-

ent owners, because of their well-known tender care of animals; for the kitten was noted for his beauty and sought for by many. His people took him home in their carriage and he acted as if he had ridden in carriages all his life, showing no nervousness, but playing with his new mistress' gloves and going to sleep while riding as if he had come to his very own. And he had, for no cat ever fitted into a household so well or had better care. He acquired the name of 'Starlight' from his love of romping on the lawn just as the stars were coming out, his snowy coat gleaming white against the grass and shrubbery. He early developed great persistency in hunting and catching mice, and once, to the terror and dismay of his mistress, even brought into the dining room a snake about two feet and a half long. Human beings regard birds as very dainty members of the animal kingdom, and are opposed to having them slaughtered——"

"Unless they want the feathers for their hats," interrupted F. O. Fowl.

"Unless they want their feathers for their hats," repeated Dolly Varden pleasantly.

"Or they want them for their own appetites," squeaked Polly Wog.

"Or they want them for their own appetites," politely repeated Dolly, "and except for these purposes, the animal or man that destroys birds is a fit subject for the condemna-

tion of the human race. Starlight did kill birds, and once set the whole sky in an uproar by bringing home a 'highhole,' as they call them in New England. Starlight held the bird by the breast, and the wings spread out so far on either side that he looked as if he were flying. The bird was screaming, and all the birds within a mile were sailing above the captor and the captive and swooping as near as they dared, and also screaming.

"The bird was taken from Starlight and doctored to seeming health and set free, and he never brought home any more birds. Starlight secured a great deal of amusement from playing with the chickens. He never hurt one intentionally, but he played several tricks with them that perhaps the chickens would not have asked for. When the flock was clustered together, eating corn, Starlight would spring from a height into their midst and, crouching down, laugh to see them scatter. He used to take delight in catching the most formidable-looking rooster by the tail and holding fast, while the rooster ran howling and dragging Starlight, as a horse would

a carriage. Another practical joke that seemed to add to Starlight's amusement was to visit the hennery, where, reaching up, he would pull the tails, one by one, of the Brahma fowls that, because of their size, were obliged to perch low. Each fowl would squawk, and as no two squawked in the same key, it was very amusing, not only to Starlight, but to the members of the family and visitors who used to slip out to see the fun. No one ever thought to inquire how the poultry enjoyed the show, but if they did not get used to it it was their own fault, for they had plenty of opportunity to do so. He is denied that pleasure now, for his people keep no fowls in their city home.

"During Starlight's first winter he was put to bed in the kitchen, and he realized so well what was for his comfort that he remained under cover in his box until the rooms were warmed in the morning. When his mistress said 'good night' to him, he always put his paws around her neck and gently bit her chin; his way of kissing. Now he does not have to say 'good night,' for he always sleeps with his owners.

"While his people lived in their home just outside of the city, Starlight used to hunt field mice, and would often spring into the air, and, coming down, turn a somersault, but come up smiling with his prey.

"As he has told you, he suffered from that

unfortunate terror of kittenhood—fits, or convulsions—but only for two or three times, for his mistress held him tightly and petted him, curing him by that simple means.

"He is very timid and hides in the darkest corner possible during a thunderstorm. When living in the country a steam threshing machine started one time within his hearing, and from where he was standing when the direful sound smote his ear, there was 'just a white streak,' his mistress said, and the streak ended in the darkest corner in her bedroom. Starlight has heard a great many jokes about the threshing-machine scare, but not upon the subject of thunderstorms, for there his mistress sympathizes with him.

"When Starlight was a little less than a year old, his people moved to another state, leaving him in the care of friends, who, when the new house was arranged, sent him in a box by express, his beauty and good sense securing him the kindest treatment upon the cars and at the stations. He found a warm welcome. The house was not entirely furnished upon his arrival, and Starlight wandered around, looking in vain for the tassels that decorated the windows, as he had been especially addicted to striking them with his paw to see how far they would fly; and when they were in place, everything seemed to be arranged to his entire satisfaction.

"This, however, did not last long, and then came the saddest day of our loved President's life. The locality being strange, he went too far in one direction and was lost! His mistress called in vain for her pet, and no answer came. He was heard of at a distant house, crying as if there were nothing in the world for him. He wandered on, and seemed to vanish. In the meantime, his mistress was taken sick, and could not prosecute her search for him. Over three months after he was lost he was seen in the 'chestnut' woods, but would permit no one to approach him, and later came word that he occasionally appeared at nightfall at a house about a mile distant. As he had then been away from home and civilization three months and a half, no one but his mistress believed that he would remember his people; the lady was sure that he would come if he heard her call, but all others said, 'No use; he is a wild cat, you cannot get him.' However, she went alone and called, 'Kittie Starlight, Kittie Starlight,' and presently she spied him where he had started to run, but at the sound of her voice turned, stopped, and, standing erect, with one front paw lifted in expectant attitude, was listening to the voice that he had longed for so many months.

"He came like one in a happy dream to meet his mistress, and she clasped him in her arms. But approaching children frightened our timid friend, and he fled again, but only ran up an apple tree, down which he seemed afraid to come, because of the presence of others. But when his master, whose voice he knew, approached with a stepladder, he was not frightened; and when his mistress went up the ladder to get him, he reached down his hands, just like a human child, to be taken. You may be sure he was taken and held in loving embrace while his owners drove home.

"Although his food had been meagre and he was half famished, he cared more for love than he cared for food, and however tempted with the choicest morsels of beefsteak, would leave them to spring into his mistress' lap, put both arms around her neck, and gently bite her face. His mistress was so affected by his demonstrations of love that she said: 'Starlight, my pet, only death shall separate you and me.'

"Starlight had howled so much for home that he had a hoarse, crying voice, and when his mistress went out of his sight he cried strangely for her. He had also forgotten how to purr. His pretty voice and purr, however, came back to him, and he gladly dropped into the ways of his own dear home. He had taken delight in following his people when

they visited their friends, but after he had been lost there was one hill, supposedly the one down which he went that mournful time that he had gone astray, where he always howled and down which he refused to go. This objection became a permanent fixture in the list of his prejudices. Starlight says he never will forget the feeling that came over him when he realized that he was lost. He says he could not ask for his worst enemy such terror-stricken sensations. He said many a time, when he was asleep in the woods, he had wakened with a start of joy, thinking he heard his mistress call, and when at last he did hear her, it seemed too beautiful to be true.

"Starlight has been taught a number of tricks; he runs through a paper tube from three rooms away when he hears the paper shaken, but stops when at the end and thrusts out his paws for play. When the tube is unrolled he dashes away, and, crouching down, waits for the roll to be made again. He shakes hands with whichever paw designated, and is very expert in the trick of jumping, assuming the proper preparatory position when requested. He understands a word of command and does not have to submit to the undignified proceeding of being chased back; he also comes when whistled for, but objects to the continuation of the whistle, for he climbs up and puts his paw on the offending mouth.

"His owners say that he plays hide and seek like a human being, and he varies it by trying to scare his pursuers by hiding behind a door, when, after springing suddenly upon them, he dashes away to be pursued again.

"He is very fond of flowers and trees, perching in a tree whenever one is accessible. Starlight has taken two trips by express, the second trip as successful as the first. He is very fond of carriage or sleigh riding, and is always ready to go, often getting into the vehicle first and waiting for his owners. A crowded street does not frighten him, which is singular, because he is so timid, but he seems to discover so many interesting objects at such a time that he has no chance for the emotion of fear. He has taken various trips upon the cars, which he also seems to enjoy, sitting with his paws upon the window sill and catching swift glances at the flying landscape. His mistress says that the nicer the hotel, the home, the house, the more welcome is Starlight, and that the only homes where he was ever repulsed were those that were so untidy that he would not leave his basket and step on the floor, and would not eat from the dishes there provided.

"He is exceedingly dainty, and all of his dishes for food are kept scrupulously clean. He is only obstinate about one thing, and that is his bath. He has a deep-rooted prejudice

against that, and his actions at such times are so foreign to himself that I will not pursue the subject. His skin is like the finest of white silk, and his fur so absolutely clean that the bath hardly seems necessary, while it is so thick and fine it is almost impossible to dry it, so he reasons that it is wrong to get it wet.

"Once, after being washed, wrapped in blankets, and groomed until finally he was dry and looked like a great ball of white cotton, he went down into the cellar and rolled in the coal, and when he came upstairs was all black, except his face, looking for all the world as if he were wrapped in a dark blanket with just his white face peeping out."

"Good joke!" said Columbus.

"Served them right," groaned Polly Wog.

"He, however, enjoys the brushing and combing given him," continued Dolly Varden, "and becomes so happily excited during the operation that he afterward starts upon a keen run. When he sees the brush and comb ready for him, he goes immediately to the place where his toilet is made.

"Starlight, as you see, weighs between fifteen and sixteen pounds, and is more than snow white. His ears, nose, and the bottom of his feet are like the finest of pink silk. It is a little strange that, no matter where he walks, the bottom of his feet is soft, clean, and dainty. He always was within call, even when

he was permitted the privilege of roaming, but since his people have lived in the more thickly populated portion of the city, he is not allowed outside, except in rare instances, and we have the benefit of those instances. His people say that there are too many diseases to be caught in the alleys for them to risk their pet in the danger.

"The facts I have told you are really the least interesting of all that might be said concerning him, but it is difficult to describe him fully in the time we have at command. He seems to have learned the language human beings use, for he is never at fault in understanding, and responds to what may be said to him in a manner that shows he understands, what-

ever the tone in which the words are uttered. He falls in with the moods of his owners, is sympathetic, sad, or merry, as most desired. He is keener as a house watcher than a dog, and has a way of telling his owners when they return if any one has been to the house during their absence. He attends thoroughly to his business, and will search for a mouse whenever told to do so, although he really never needs telling when one is in the vicinity. When certain things are done at certain hours and the time has passed by, Starlight reminds his people of the fact by looking at the clock and at them, until they start to do that which he reminds them of. That he can tell the time by the clock his people are convinced. He remembers and greets people after years of absence.

"He never quarrels with cat or dog, unless forced to do so, and then he never comes out second best."

"Good," said F. O. Fowl.

"That's so," said Columbus.

"At one time there was a cat that was the terror of the neighborhood," continued Dolly Varden; "he was a big fellow and the surrounding cats were afraid of him. He was dreadfully bad, just like some human beings. He and Starlight met one night; the fight was long, and Starlight was pretty well bruised, but the other cat had one eye taken out, and was

so nearly demolished that he never again pounced upon innocent and unsuspecting kittens. He was decidedly upon the retired list."

"Whoop la!" said Columbus, and he actually turned a somersault, while F. O. Fowl looked on complacently, and said to him:

"I guess that will do for both of us."

"Starlight has not had many fights," said Dolly Varden, "but he never gives up when he gets started, and unless taken away by main force he continues the combat until the other cat is a sorry-looking specimen."

"I'll take a turn this time," said F. O. Fowl, and so we had another somersault in our midst.

Dolly Varden smiled, as if she were pleased that so much interest was taken in her story, and continued:

"Starlight is known all over the State as one of the prettiest, if not the prettiest, cat in the United States. Perfect strangers hear of him and come to visit him, but none except those who live with him can understand his intelligence. His mistress says he never did a wrong thing in his life, never a thing that required rebuke. He is absolutely honest, and the choicest dainties may be left near him when he is alone in the room, without his disturbing them. His hearing is so acute that the softest step is audible to him, and no watch dog is necessary in his abode. He submits with quiet

and dignified grace to being tied, never attempting to get away when finding himself fast. He also leads quietly, and will stay uncomplainingly in a basket when placed there, for he has perfect confidence in the good intentions of his people regarding him.

"Our friend submits only to kind treatment and can endure no other. A cross look, word, or action and he hies him out of sight, and does not make his appearance until all is serene. His voice is all for peace. I hope," said Dolly Varden, "that I have given you a faint idea of the character and quality of our President, and I know you will love him better because of the narration, and love him more and more as your acquaintance with him increases."

Just as the last sentence was spoken, our President walked slowly in.

"Hello! Here you are!" shouted our incorrigible Columbus. "We've just been talking good about you."

"Perhaps I had better retire and let you continue your conversation," said Starlight, "for I am very glad to be thought well of."

"Oh, no!" said Columbus. "Get right up on the platform. Taciturn, you get down quick! Nobody but Starlight on that barrel when Starlight is here."

Columbus was talking so fast that Taciturn had no chance to retire gracefully, nor Starlight to protest against his retiring, and in

order to smooth things out, I interrupted quickly, saying:

"We are glad of the presence of our President, and I move a vote of thanks to our temporary chairman for his kindness in assuming the gavel when necessary."

"I second that motion," said F. O. Fowl.

The motion was carried, and Starlight said immediately: "I should like to have Taciturn continue in the duty he has begun." But Taciturn was already descending from the rostrum, and Columbus marched Starlight immediately into position.

"How far, Taciturn," asked Starlight, "had you proceeded with business?"

"We had not even commenced the regular order, and were engaged in listening to stories."

"All right, then," was the answer, "we shall now listen to the report."

After my report had been accepted we were startled to hear Plum's high-pitched voice propound this conundrum: "Why are cats most always called 'she'?"

"Because they are pretty," answered Pinkie, looking conscious

"Because they are soft," answered Polly Wog.

"In what way?" queried Annette sharply.

"In the head," squeaked Polly Wog.

Then there might have been trouble, for

there was general spitting and growling, and menacing looks were cast at the offender, not only by the sisters, but by the chivalrous brothers; but our President arose and, bringing down the gavel, said:

"Order! I depend upon the happy cats of this convention to quiet all unpleasantness, and especially to forgive one who has suffered as Polly Wog has."

"I don't care whether they forgive me or not. I'm not hunting forgiveness," groaned Polly Wog, his voice quavering into a subdued screech.

Then we all laughed, and Polly Wog did not seem to be disturbed about that, either; and, as if to bring peace, little Rose, Mrs. Chase's cat, purred out:

"I guess it's because females are the cream of all creation; cats are the cream of all physical creation, and so, naturally, they are called 'she.'"

"Because they are graceful," said gallant Turvey.

Then it was very funny to see all of our sisters pose, arise and change positions, and discover unpleasant unevennesses in their resting places; for a while it was like the figure in the old quadrille called "Do-ci-do."

Presently these gliding pussies caught sight of each other, and of the amused looks upon

their brothers' faces, and suddenly became quiet. Then we all laughed again.

"Well, you are so brilliant with your conundrums, Plum," said Pinkie, "tell us the answer. We give it up."

"Oh, I don't know," answered Plum unconcernedly. "I just asked for information."

Then Polly Wog almost laughed, and, of course, we had various concatenations. It was some time before we were quiet. Finally the President said:

"The chair chooses to consider that Pinkie, Rose, and Turvey have answered the question correctly."

There was a little interchange of remarks after this, and I was congratulating the President upon settling the conundrum subject so nicely, when I heard Columbus give a purring call and saw him start for the door, without asking to be excused and without even saying: 'Good-by.'

"Must you go, Columbus?" said Starlight.

"Yes, I'm hungry," was the answer, and without more ado away he went.

The oddities of this unique friend of ours gradually became the subject of conversation, and I here record his story and characteristics, as brought out by his indulgent mother, Queenie, and other intimate friends. Queenie and Plato, Columbus' brother, had been given away, but they could not quite reconcile them-

selves to the fact that Columbus should have been chosen by his people as the favorite, and retained at the old home.

Here is the story of Columbus.

Columbus is one of our peculiar friends, and unlike most of our race, has more love and petting than he knows what to do with, and some of us think more than he deserves, for he is very selfish. His personal appearance I have already described; he is very beautiful and attracts much attention. He has never known anything but the extreme of kindness and does not realize his selfishness.

He was born in the house that is still and probably always will be his home. When about three months old he was taken very sick, and all sorts of cures were prescribed for him. One person said to his owners: "You give him too much fish." He never had touched fish. Another said: "You give him too much raw meat." He never had tasted raw meat.

Weeks passed on, and Columbus grew worse and worse, and was just a crying little shadow, and his owners were importuned time and again to chloroform him, and upon advice he was dosed with all kinds of medicines until he was given up to die.

The chloroform was ready, but his mistress could not let him go in that way. At last she said:

"Well, we have starved that cat to please

people, now I am going to please myself and please Columbus once." And at her request the man of the house brought a pound of beefsteak, cut it up fine, and placed it before the sick one. The kitten stayed not in his going for it, but he went at once, and when he ceased eating he looked like a snake that had swallowed a chicken. But best of all, he began at that moment to get well, and with the exception of a few dizzy spells, never has been sick since. In some of his dizzy spells he was perfectly blind, and once, if he had not been discovered, he might have suffered; for, having slipped out of the house, he was found sitting motionless where he would have been attacked by dogs, and was powerless to get away. His owners took him in the house and held him closely until he was all right.

When Columbus was about four months old he was taken with his mother and brother Plato to their new home, and left with them for a two weeks' visit, while his people were away. He understood why he was a guest, and never attempted to stray. Later, while his owners were absent a month, Columbus visited at the house of a friend of the family,

and although human beings thought it was strange he could know enough not to roam from his temporary home, any one who knew Columbus even then realized his wisdom was equal to knowing what was wanted of him.

After the visit just mentioned, he was at home five months, then again visited five months with his owner's friend. By constant association with human beings he has learned to attach himself strictly to them, going to picnics with his owners, following them closely to and from neighboring houses, answering and coming quickly when summoned by name, and always choosing his resting places in close proximity to his friends. He likes to get into boxes and bureau drawers, and when he was very small he would play all day on a bed, if a pitcher were placed there for him to run in and out of.

When he was a tiny kitten he slept upon his mistress' desk when she wrote, or in her hair when she reclined, and now his weight and size make such affectionate advances somewhat oppressive, although he never receives a repulse. In fact, he never is driven from the desk, his mistress accepting for her use the smallest possible corner, and when he would cozy in her hair, she lets him rest upon her shoulder.

Of course we are not asking for such baby-

ing as that, but we would all like it, and would not be slow in showing our appreciation.

If Columbus were turned out in the cold world to search for a living, I cannot imagine what would become of him.

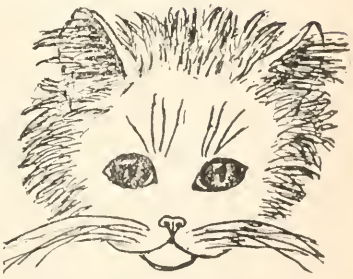
Since his sickness he has had the most perfect of foods—sweet, fresh milk and fresh meat, with any other dainty he may happen to desire. As I have already intimated, he is inordinately selfish. When he is sleepy he must be permitted to sleep; when he wants to eat, he is so positive about it, makes his demands in such vigorous tones of voice, that he is attended to for the sake of peace. If he is in the humor for petting, he is very sweet and gentle, but if his inclinations are averse, he unmistakably announces the fact by growls and scratches. If he wants to go out of doors, he tries persistently to turn knobs, but, of course, they are not made for the manipulation of cats' paws, and he rarely succeeds; but he rattles the door attachments until his wishes are complied with. He often tries to let in callers, especially when his people are not there to answer the call to the door.

If in the morning the people of the house do not arise at a certain time, Columbus takes it upon himself to waken them, and if they do not respond readily, he repeats the demand—becoming more and more vigorous until, if the delay is too much extended, he flies to the bed

of his owners, and attacks them with so much ferocity that they heed his request in a hurry. Because Columbus is so much loved by his people, these pranks amuse them, but most of us would receive a lasting lesson for such an exhibition of peculiarities that would suppress all originality for all time. Columbus is now learning to sit up while he is eating, and to shake hands; he already jumps over the clasped hands and adds one trick which some of us may, because of natural antipathy, find difficult of attainment—he plays in the water, paddling it about with all the abandonment of a child, and sometimes he sits down by a wash bowl and washes his face like human beings. He very readily plunges his arm in water up to his shoulder, to fish out anything he desires.

Of course, our repugnance to water is caused mainly by our dislike of getting our fur wet, as it dries so slowy.

Coumbus is an expert in getting into a hammock, and whenever he wants to go to sleep and a hammock is convenient, he monopolizes it. Our friend is very fond of flowers and trees, and when shut up in his own home drags the flowers from the vases and tears the potted plants, and no amount of persuasion or punishment can check him in his pursuit of happiness. He forgives, however,



as he hopes to be forgiven, for he comes up smiling and ready for play after each punishment—as if none had been administered.

Columbus gives promise of being very large, as he is not yet two years old, and weighs fifteen pounds, and we cats believe it is entirely through his bountiful and wise supply of food.

Not any of us expect the care and caresses showered upon this pampered pet. Not any of us expect to be forgiven should we persistently infringe upon the comfort of our owners, although it might not be an unremunerative experiment for human beings to try such treatment with some of us, especially with those of us who have good pedigrees for a foundation. Perhaps had our owners made us such intimate friends as Columbus' people have made him, we too might be just as closely attached, just as ready to follow every step indoors or out, just as ready to learn tricks and be beautiful enough to attract attention, just as is the friend in consideration. Another point is this, and I hope it will form an important part of our resolutions: All animals should be talked to. Columbus is addressed as if he were a human being, and he has learned to respond whenever spoken to. In fact, his conversations are often too loud and continuous to please people.

Although he does not speak in the language of his owners, they learn his sentiments al-

most entirely by the tones of his voice. There are many races of human beings who supply the place of words by inflections, making one word serve thirty or more purposes, according to inflection, and if our language is formed upon that plan I do not see that it makes our race as much below others as many of our owners continually assert.

The remarks concerning Columbus were concluded at an opportune moment, for immediately after Columbus re-entered in a most leisurely manner, his long, large tail held high and waving slowly back and forth, his golden eyes looking intelligently from one to another, and his musical greetings audible in all parts of the room. Evidently his lunch had put him in good humor.

He came over and sat down by me. While this position upon his part would ordinarily have added to my pleasure, it was a serious menace to the composure of mind which I felt necessary fittingly to bear in mind and clearly to report proceedings, for Columbus kept up a running fire of comment upon the appearance of the speakers, and I laughed so much that I offended several, and received a reproving glance from the President.

I must have suddenly become grave, for Columbus gurgled:

"Hello! What's the matter with you? Got a bone in your throat? Just hold your head

low, and I will spat you on the back, or run my paw down your throat. I am very apt to get them in my throat, too, when I eat fish, but always after I have had a bone in my throat my mistress is very careful to look over the fish before she gives it to me, and take out the bones. Sometimes she gets a little careless, and as I think it too much trouble to pick out the bones myself, I pretend to choke, whether I do or not, and then she is a little more careful again. Oh, these human beings need jacking up to our level once in a while; they like

to forget their duty, and become slipshod in their manner of handling us and of handling themselves. I don't allow my mistress to forget her duty one minute. Sometimes she gets out of sight, and I don't intend to allow her to do that. If it ever happens, I just yell this way: W-o-o-u-u-ow, and——"

But dear me, Columbus did let out such a horrible, ear-splitting yowl that we all jumped

to our feet, thinking that he had a fit, or had gone mad, or that some one had stuck a pin in him, but he never noticed anything wrong and kept on gurgling to me:

"And I tell you that fetches her. She either comes for me or calls out, 'Here, Columbus!' and I go to her, and she learns that it is not the proper thing to leave me alone. It is just as well to teach our attendants their duty first as last; it won't do to be slack, or to allow them the least liberty; they will take advantage of it. Of course, with our claws and our teeth we have them at a disadvantage, and I have given my master some great, deep gashes that will cause him to look out how he brushes my coat after this. If he don't prove a gentler valet, I am afraid I shall have to discharge him, although I confess to being very much attached to him."

"The house will come to order," said the President, by way of quieting the monologue.

"Oh, yes, certainly, Mr. President," gurgled Columbus. "I think order is a very good thing; it is absolutely necessary for human beings. They seem to have no way of accomplishing anything unless they are tied to order."

Just then our little peacemaker, Pinkie, walked over to our talkative friend, and said:

"Columbus, won't you come and sit by me a while? I want to ask you some questions."

"Oh, certainly," answered our spoiled friend. "If you don't ask too many."

So the two went to some distance from us, and Pinkie told me afterward that she had a good talk with Columbus, telling him how many cats were suffering, and that if he listened well he would hear some dreadful stories, and perhaps he would be able to give some good advice regarding the manner in which cats could direct the deportment of the people who kept house for them.

When Columbus had sufficiently subsided, our President said:

"We shall be glad to hear now any histories, complaints, or suggestions."

At this point I asked permission to speak, and after gaining it, I said:

"We descendants of Grandpa Thomas, of Bushville, persuaded the wise patriarch to have his picture taken, and I here present it for inspection."

Everybody seemed delighted with it, and said that I resembled my honored ancestor.

Thomas of Bushville is very proud, for his people are old settlers, and the master of the house is wealthy, and has been mayor of his town, and has a great reputation for honesty—which is said to be a grace that is fast dying out in the human race. Grandpa Thomas is Maltese, like myself, and we don't know how old he is, but he has things pretty much his own

way at the suburban home of his owners. I told of his good qualities, his attachment to his people, and that he was well along in years, and I received the thanks of the convention for bringing the picture.

"I think that others of us ought to have our pictures taken," said Turvey. "Starlight has had both photographs and an oil painting made of himself, and his owners would not part with them for anything. Then Dolly Varden, as you have heard, has had photographs and an oil painting made of *herself*. Dolly Varden, did not that oil painting of you that was at the St. Louis Fair have a funny name?"

In response to the question, our beautiful belle came near the front and answered.

"At first thought, it would seem so," she answered. "My mistress, however, who painted the picture, said that if she called the portrait 'Have I a Soul?' it might set people thinking more about animals and the way they were abused. She believed that animals had souls, and she thought perhaps other people might come to the same conclusion if they only stopped to think a minute. She said that if science proved that nothing was wasted upon earth, the brain power and instincts of animals, being of so much more consequence than a grain of dust, must be preserved somewhere, in congenial surroundings."

"Did the name of the picture cause comment at the Fair?" asked Katrina Rogers.

"It is reported that it did," answered Dolly Varden modestly.

"The soul question," said the President, "is something that must come before us at no distant day. Meanwhile I am glad that it is brought before the convention now, in order that we may be thinking and securing proof for our opinions upon the subject."

"How did you manage to keep still enough to have your picture painted?" inquired Columbus irreverently.

"The photographer came to the house and caught a snapshot of me; in fact, caught several. But my mistress liked one pose the best, and used that for the broad study, and then her maid held me for the detail work. I was only five months old then, and I had not learned to be as distrustful of mankind as I became later. The photographer came three times, but the last time I had grown in knowledge of human nature, and I would not let him come near me. Besides that," she added, "no human beings wash themselves eight or nine times a day, the way I do."

Then Dolly Varden went back to her place and brushed off a little before she could feel contented to quiet down. She did not realize that she was so much more particular than most cats, and was unconscious of the half-

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amused and wholly interested looks cast upon her during her cleansing process.

At this point Peek-a-Boo, a fine-looking yellow cat, gaining permission, arose and said:

"For a long time I lived near a family that seemed perennially composed of small children, and kittens were procured for pets with about the same feeling that rubber balls would have been, and they were as heartlessly handled. A dainty bright kitten would not be bright more than a week when it would commence to look thin and dragged out. In two weeks it would have no strength to mew or get away from its tormentors, and in a month, if it had strength enough to do so, it would drag its poor little emaciated self into an out-of-the-way corner, and breathe its troubled life away. Another 'dead kitten,' and that was all. Kitten after kitten shared the same fate. I say 'kitten after kitten' because no kitten ever grew to be a cat, and neighbors who knew the ways of the house, and themselves had any sensitiveness, would rather kill a pet any time than let it go into such a cruel home. I always think fathers and mothers who allow such cruelties must have had no decent bringing up, and must have had parents of low morality; although I am ashamed and sorry to say that in affluent and presumably cultivated homes I have seen children allowed to ill treat their pets."

"Yes," interrupted Skeezicks, who was white

and gray in color and very gentle and retiring, "I, too, have been in families where I have been pulled and hauled about, and the life almost crushed out of me, and my legs twisted until it seemed as if everything were solid pain. Accidentally scratching the 'little dear' when I tried to get away, the mother would come and slap my tender, weary head until I was crazy with pain and fright, cringing almost into nothing to shrink from the cruel blows; then she would say:

" 'Naughty cat, nasty thing, to scratch my petsy so. There (slap), see (slap), mama whips the bad cat,' (slap, slap, slap). In about a week 'Petsy' would learn the trick. The only reason that I am living now is that I ran away from those places, preferring to trust myself to the tender mercies of the street rather than to brutes who were manufactured into the shapes of such human beings."

Similar instances were given by several members of the convention, and as the subject seemed endless, Peek-a-Boo was asked to resume.

"It is very seldom," said he, "that children under five years of age hold a kitten properly. They have no idea of petting a kitten, but they slap, and pinch it, and pull its tail, lie upon it, punch its eyes with their fingers, force rough things into its mouth—mamas looking on complacently, if only the baby is amused. When

these children are men and women, the mothers and fathers are woefully shocked at their heartlessness, and still later, when the useless old men and women are sent by the well-to-do son and daughter 'over the hill to the poor house,' they learn that the seeds of cruelty sown in babyhood bear full fruitage."

"Cats have more brain power than human beings," added Skeezicks, still smarting under the thought of the cruel injustice he had suffered, "to recover from such blows upon the head as I have received. I wonder cats do not become idiots just as some of their owners."

Here George interrupted. George was small and black, with breast and feet as white as snow.

"I want to protest," said he, "against the dirty dishes given us to eat out of. Every one knows the cat is by choice the cleanest animal on earth in its personal habits, and if *any* animal needs clean water and clean receptacles for food, I am sure we do. We never touch dirty food if we can avoid it. We would starve to death, and many of us do starve to death, right in the midst of food that chickens eat. Yet chickens are taken into dainty stomachs of dainty invalids as dainty morsels. Bah! Think of it! I am glad, however, we are not considered in this country an edible creation, for we have another chance for life."

"Yet, brother George, you must acknowledge," said staid Josephine, "that were we considered of value as food, we, with the exception of a favored few, would receive care in a degree of which now we know nothing. We should be provided with food to make us large and fat, we should be given cozy, nice, clean places to sleep, we should never be worried, we should be given plenty of water to drink, and we should not be allowed to suffer from cold. Are the lazy, dirty pigs ever starved or frozen? Do the cows have to hide under boards to protect themselves from boys and dogs? Do fat oxen ever have any annoyances? Look at them in their green pastures, simply munching, and sleeping, and drinking all day long. Cats and horses are about the only domestic animals expected to earn their living. Cows give milk because they can't help it, and hens lay because they are made that way. Horses are expected to work, although their necks are raw, their legs in bunches, and their breath comes in gasps. I have known of horses being made to pull until they pulled themselves blind. They are driven until they drop dead. Can any one imagine what a horse suffers before he drops in his tracks? And with most of us, if we do not find plenty of mice, we may starve. I am comfortable and happy with all the good things of life, but it hurts me to know how little other cats are

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FRANK BOLDTIE. "WHO ARE YOU?"

appreciated, especially when I know they deserve just as good treatment as I do."

Prince Connore here manifested a desire to speak. This cat was one of our aristocratic felines, and we were glad to hear from him. He was of noted Prince Orange stock, was a full-blooded Angora of strong orange color, large collar and tail, and a pathetic appealing face that made everybody love him. He was related to sweet little Topaz and looked like him, but was large and full grown.

"Your point is well taken, Sister Josephine," said he. "At the same time I confess my inability to overcome a great repugnance to being eaten; however, I am willing to accept the place in the economy of nature in which I am most needed."

"Provided it is a clean place," suggested Dolly Varden.

"Always provided it is a clean place," acquiesced Prince Connore graciously. "Do you remember the little fable," he continued, "which accounts for the cat washing its face after eating?"

"No, tell it," cried several voices.

"Once upon a time," commenced the Prince, "when conversation between animals of different kinds was more general than now, and consequently better understood, a cat in response to her natural instinct captured a sparrow for

supper. Then, as now, the sparrow was cunning, and thus bamboozled the cat:

" 'Dear cat,' said he, 'of course you have me in your power, and I may as well succumb to the inevitable. I know my days, my minutes, yea, my seconds are numbered, since once within the power of your masterful claws there is no escape. I have one favor, one boon, that I crave at your hands. Like the cat tribe I, too,

am neat. I have my preferences, besides which I have a very delicate stomach, and upon your paws and face I notice the odor, bah! of the last unfragrant mouse you caught. Will you, good cat, may I beg that you will grant the little boon that I ask, since I am entirely within your power? Will you? Will you, dear, good cat, please wash your face and paws before you eat me? Let me go to my death in as unrepulsive a manner as possible.' "

"Of course, the request appealed to the well-known cleanliness of the cat, and, releasing the

sparrow, the cat proceeded to cleanse her face and paws. In a flash away flew the sparrow, and puss went supperless to bed, but then and there she made this resolution:

"'Be it resolved for myself in particular, and for as many cats as care to take my advice, that I never again will wash my face until I am through eating. Thereunto I bind myself, even as I hope to keep from starvation.'

"Since then all cats have performed their ablutions immediately after refreshments, and especially after they feel that they have had a 'bountiful sufficiency.'"

Some of us had heard the story before, but those who had not were delighted with it, and we all thanked Prince Connore for repeating it, and then adjourned because the clocks were warning us of the noon hour.

END OF THIRD DAY.

FOURTH DAY.

This fourth day of the convention opened with the usual number of cats in attendance. As one might naturally suppose, all of our members may not be in attendance at every meeting; some are kept in the house by their people, and some have family cares, while others are timid and become frightened on the way here.

We had not seen Johnnie Bear for some time; he walked in to-day looking well and happy.

"Well, where have you been?" said Columbus, before anybody could say anything.

"Oh!" said Johnny Bear, sitting down with a sigh, "I have been frightened almost to death."

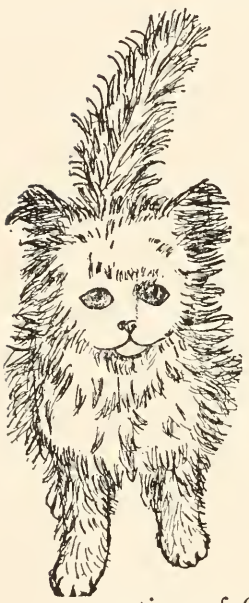
"How? How? How?" asked half a dozen members at a time.

"Here is a cleaner place," said Dolly Varden, who had sometimes seen Johnny Bear from her back porch and felt enough interest in him to wish him to have a tidy place from which to tell his story.

"Well, about two weeks ago," said he, accepting Dolly Varden's offer, "my people commenced to take up the carpets and clean house in general. Two of the young ladies are school teachers, and as they like to assist in the annual cleaning they delay it until their vacation. The tearing-up process kept on, but nothing seemed to be put back in place, and I felt that something was entirely wrong. No one told me anything, so I went to ask Tige, a gray cat and a near neighbor, what he thought about it, but he would not listen to me and just kept on scolding. Some of his people came out to watch us and hear our conversation, and while I held my ground without budging an inch, Tige backed out and went into the house. So you see I got no consolation there, and all that I could do was to wait and watch developments. Then what do you think they did? They commenced taking the furniture *out of the house,* first one thing then another, and soon everything was gone, even old dog Dick, and there I was alone. You don't know how I felt. What I was going to do I could not tell. It seemed like the end of the world. I don't make up with people easily, even having my

favorites in my own home, and because of my peculiarities, thought I would have to be homeless like Polly Wog.

"Nights, oh! it was so lonesome, so dreary, with no one to call me in for the night where it was comfortable. Of course, all I could do was to sit humped up and have the blues, and I got lonelier and more lonely. Even the bushes and the grass did not seem the same; the wild cucumber vine over the back porch withered and died for want of water, and everything seemed coming to an end. I moved from one place to another, but no place seemed right. My people are church members and some of them are very active in church work, and it did not seem possible that they would forsake me. They belong, also, to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and I actually felt like reporting them.



"My! how I felt! It makes me shudder now when I think of it. Well, I came to the point where I almost gave up and wanted to commit suicide. There was one thing which I could not understand at the time, although it has since been made clear to me, and that was that occasionally I would find meat and milk

placed where I could get them; of course, I took the food, and by that means I kept from getting thin, but I really had no appetite. I did not feel like ever doing anything again for pleasure.

"Then all of a sudden, toward dark one evening, I heard one of my people calling me. You may be sure that I was glad, but I was always a little timid and backward about going to people that I feared did not want me, so I held back, all the time that I hoped she would come and get me. Then I heard her telling another lady, who seemed very much interested in me, that she had left food for me, and had been trying to find me to take me home. Like a flash it came to me that they had not forgotten me and did not intend to leave me, and then I became dreadfully afraid that I was holding back too long, and I let her catch me. Oh! how good it felt to have the hands on me again of some one that belonged to me. Still, I was awfully frightened when she started to take me away off in a direction which I had known nothing about, and I became so nervous that I scratched away from her and ran back to the only place that I knew anything about. However, she came next day and took me home in a basket to make sure of me.

"I was without a home just as long as I want to be. So, boys and girls, I am all right

now, and should be glad to see any of you at my home. We live on the hill where the air is pure, and it may not always be convenient for me to come to these meetings, but rest assured, I shall come whenever possible."

When Johnny Bear finished his story, we congratulated him upon the happy termination of his troubles, and assured him that we should take pleasure in meeting him in his new home.

Dolly Varden was not very talkative, but seemed to feel deeply concerning Johnny Bear's story, and, gaining recognition, addressed herself to the President.

"Mr. President," said she, "this is one of the most important questions to come before the Committee upon Resolutions. A very strange superstition has gained ground among the uneducated, that it is unlucky to move a cat. Where right and luck conflict, my mistress always takes the right and trusts to Providence. How can people expect good luck or good results to attend their efforts if they do wrong? Johnny Bear has described vividly to you the awful sensation of being left alone. His experience had a happy ending, but what if it had continued indefinitely? Many cats lose their appetites entirely when forsaken and starve to death. Some cats are not demonstrative, but love their owners just as much as if they were. I know that I do not show as much affection as I feel, and I know if I were left

alone I should just huddle myself in a corner and stay there until I died."

Bonnie was recognized and repeated Dolly Varden's views, as did several of the members, in terms of positive conviction.

Immediately after this our hearts were sorely touched by the pathetic story of a midget which, unseen by all except Pinkie, had crept into our hall.

At the proper time Pinkie, gaining attention, said:

"Mr. President, we have in our midst a stranger who is diffident about announcing herself. Have I your permission to bring her near my position?"

"Pinkie, you are sure to have the right instincts," said the President, "and if you ask this privilege it is certainly granted."

Pinkie arose and tripped over to a little dark corner, where only the most penetrating eyes and the kindest heart could have discovered anything, and, after purring and using many coaxing words of encouragement, she walked slowly back with her little protégée, who leaned closely by her side and cast frightened but wistful glances at the many strange and inquiring faces.

It was a sad-looking midget thus taken under the protecting care of our sweet Pinkie. It was no larger than a two months old kitten. It was intended to be black, but the under fur

was gray or Maltese in tone, and it was all so ragged and tossed that the gray showed almost as much as the tarnished black, making the kitten look as if it were denuded in patches. It was so thin that it looked like a little crooked stick on four lead pencils. Its eyes were pale blue, and there was such a pathetic appeal in their upward glances that we all seemed to hold our breaths for fear of hurting its feelings or frightening it away.

When Pinkie reached her place she cuddled close to the stranger, and said:

"Mr. President, I have persuaded our little sister to become one of us and to tell her story, as we are all trying to help each other, and she may be of assistance in enabling us to arrive at proper conclusions."

"We are very much obliged to you, Pinkie, for bringing forward your friend," said our President. "Will you introduce her to the convention?"

But the visitor refused to go forward unless Pinkie was by her side, and as they were advancing we heard Pinkie say:

"What is your name?"

"I don't know," answered the thinnest, weakest little voice we ever heard.

"Don't people call you anything?" said Pinkie, with motherly anxiety.

"They always say, 'Scat' to me, so maybe that's my name," was the answer.

With never a smile nor a word to indicate the opprobrious nature of the exclamation, Pinkie very gravely and tenderly said:

"Allow me to introduce our new member, 'Scat.' Now, dear little Scat, you can tell our friends where you were born."

"What's 'born'?" said Scat, looking up into Pinkie's face with childlike simplicity.

"Well, never mind telling us that, then," said her self-appointed guardian. "Do you remember your mother?"

"Yes, I can just remember her, but I was so little when they took me away that I can hardly know that I had a mother."

"Who took you away?" asked Pinkie, by way of encouragement, and feeling assured of the convention's kindly sympathy in her magnanimous exertions.

"Why, Tommie," answered Scat.

"Who was Tommie?" asked the mentor.

"He was one of the little boys in the home where my mother belonged."

"What did he take you away for?"

"Oh, because."

Well, that was not very lucid, and Pinkie commenced to look a little confused.

"Why didn't you scratch him if you didn't want to go?" asked Columbus.

"I never thought of it," whined Scat.

"Perhaps you wanted to go," suggested Josephine.

"I guess I wasn't old enough to think anything about it," answered Scat.

We all concluded it was quite reasonable to suppose that must have been the case.

"Weren't you lonesome without your mother?" asked Josephine.

"Oh, yes, I was so lonesome and so frightened I cried all the time."

"Where did Tommie take you?" croaked Polly Wog.

Scat gave a startled jump at the harsh voice and put up her little back in a funny crook, but Pinkie krrrrrrd her down, and Scat, in a fainter voice than ever, said:

"He drownded me."

"Drowned you?" came in a dozen surprised voices.

"Yes," said Scat, and then as the others became excited she seemed to secure composure, and, sitting down, looked with weak and witless wonder upon the astonished faces around her.

"Well, you are not very lively," said F. O. Fowl, "but you are pretty lively for a corpse."

"Oh! I didn't get drownded dead entirely," said Scat.

"So it seems," squeaked Polly Wog.

And that brought Scat to her feet again, only to be smoothed down by Pinkie.

"Now, Scat," said the helpful friend, "you know none of us has been drowned, and we

would like to know how it feels, and what you thought of, and how you escaped."

Then Scat sat directly facing Pinkie and very near her, so that in looking into Pinkie's eyes she was obliged to bend her head back a little. With Pinkie looking encouragingly down, the two made a funny picture. In this manner, as if she were talking to Pinkie alone, Scat, with little interruptions by way of encouragement, told her story.

"No, I didn't think anything about anything, I guess. When Tommy threw me into the water I didn't know it was to kill me, and I commenced scratching to get where it was dry, and as soon as I got on the shore of the river he picked me up and threw me in again, and then I was so tired I went down to the bottom, but I held my breath, and after a while I came up again, and then he was gone. When I came out nobody was near, and it was so cold and I was so wet that I shook pretty hard, and I couldn't find anything to eat. I kept crawling around, and after a while, when it had been dark six or seven times, I came to a house and was going to walk into a door, but they all said, 'Scat, you fright!' and threw things at me, and, of course, I ran away.

"And I have been going and going and going ever since, and am old enough now to know that there are lots of cats that have nice homes and plenty to eat. But nobody wants me. I never had much to eat, and I guess I don't know how to grow. I have often thought that I did not. All I get is something occasionally from some one's garbage pail, and most of the time I am driven away from that chance of getting something to eat. I am so little, you know."

"Let them try it before me," snorted F. O. Fowl.

Pinkie gave the last speaker a melting look, and we were all clearing our throats to say something in the same line, when Scat's little voice continued:

"I never had a friend. I wouldn't know how to act if I had a friend. I don't think I would want a friend."

"Why, not?" said F. O. Fowl, evidently nettled.

"Well, you see," answered the little innocent, "I couldn't do anything for a friend. I just couldn't be of any use at all."

"No," said Josephine thoughtfully, "you could be of but little use now, but suppose a friend secured a good home for you where you could get plenty to eat and could get well and strong and large, wouldn't you fight for that friend?"

"Well, I guess I would," said little Scat, standing up and glancing bravely around as if she already felt the swelling brawn and muscle and revivifying glow.

Then we all cheered. Pinkie looked happy, and poor little Scat seemed to be walking on the tips of her toes.

"And you have no home yet?" asked Pinkie, by way of urging her on.

"No, nobody wants me. You don't know how many people I have asked to take me. The other day a lady passed me and said: 'Poor little kitty!' and I trotted after her, and just then another lady crossed the street and said the same thing and I started to follow her, and then she walked too fast, and I sat down in the street trying to make up my mind which one I should follow, when both of them got away from me."

"It would not have been of any use for you to follow them," said Queenie, "for if they had wanted you they would have picked you up and have carried you home."

"Oh, dear!" sighed the little waif, "how nice that would have been! I would be so glad to have something to eat and some one to hold me."

Just then we heard a slight noise in the corner of the barn; we all knew what it was, but the only one who did not preserve his company manners was F. O. Fowl, who sprang

away like a flash and in a second was back with a mouse, which he laid down before Scat and then returned to his position. Scat was so surprised that she simply put her paw on the mouse which F. O. Fowl had killed and looked around, when from all sides arose the cry: "Eat it! Eat it!"

"You see when F. O. Fowl is a friend, he is in earnest," said Pinkie.

"Oh! Oh!" ejaculated Scat.

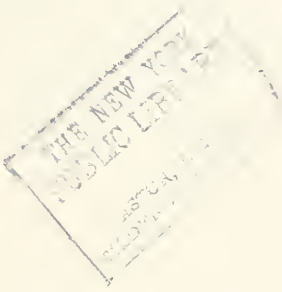
Then she had that mouse down her throat in about a minute, and, smacking her lips, she looked at F. O. Fowl and said:

"My! isn't he a good cat?"

"He was once, anyway," said poor Polly Wog.

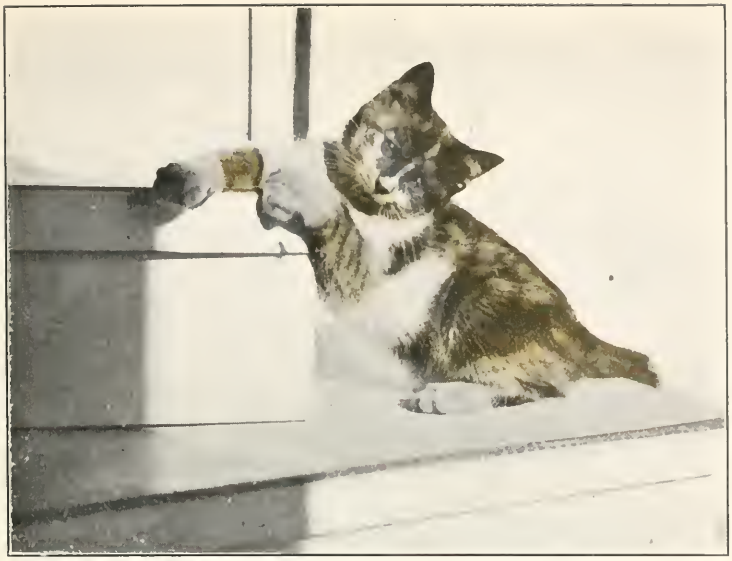
There was a little indication of rising wrath upon the part of F. O. Fowl, but the general cordiality of sentiment then pervading the session unconsciously smoothed him down. Then, with a sudden inspiration, Dolly Varden took the floor.

"Mr. President," said she, "human beings often enliven their deliberative assemblies by the introduction of refreshments, and I hereby



DOLLY VARDON—"HAVE I A SOUL?"

DOLLY VARDON- "HOW DO YOU DO?"



DOLLY VARDON—"AIN'T I CUTE?"

DOLLY VARDON—"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?"

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move that our proceedings hereafter be brightened by such a social innovation."

Immediately the older heads saw the charitable intent of the motion, and after a hearty second by Muggins, the motion was carried unanimously.

In announcing the vote there was a little twinkle adorning the corner of the eye of our President, and he pronounced "unanimously," "unani-mouse-ly."

"It is *meet* it should be so," added Columbus, who was exceedingly quick to understand a joke and always ready to talk.

By this time Scat was so much at home that our President asked her to give some more of her experiences.

"Was anybody kind to you?" he asked.

"No; well, yes. I think two or three little girls would have been kind to me if their parents had permitted. When the children were coming home from school one day I was crouching in a corner by some stone steps hoping to see some one that looked pleasant, when two little girls, with their dinner baskets, came along.

" 'See what an ugly kitten,' said one

" 'I guess you'd be ugly, too, if you were starved and had no home,' answered the other.

" 'Yes, but I ain't starved and I've got a home,' said the first little girl.

" 'I didn't eat all of my dinner, and I shall

give this poor little thing some, and if you don't want to wait, Bertha, you may just go along.'

" 'Well, I declare, Almeda, if you do, I'll go right to your mother and tell her that you are playing with a dirty little cat."

" 'I don't care if you do. Good-by. I'm going to feed this kitten right away.'

"Bertha ran away and Almeda sat down on the step, opened her basket, and gave me some cake and meat and bread and butter.

" 'You eat just as if you were half starved,' she said.

"I was more than half starved, you may be sure.

" 'I wish I had some milk for you,' said Almeda, 'but I haven't, and I know what I'll do. I'll take you home with me.'

"I was so glad that I just trembled all over. She put me in her dinner basket, and I went to washing my face and hands so I would look better. Then I heard her talking to herself.

" 'I don't suppose mamma will be pleased. I shouldn't think she would like poor little things to be hungry. I know just what I'll do. I'll take my dinner basket to my room and get her some milk.'

"We went up the steps of a residence. I had never dared go near so fine a one, and Almeda's mother, with Bertha at her side, was standing right at the door.

"'Bertha says you stopped to play with a dirty little cat and fed it from your dinner basket,' said her mother. 'Now, let me take your basket. You shall not take any dinner to-morrow.'

"'Oh, mamma, please let me take my basket to my room. I will be good.'

"'No, indeed,' said her mamma.

"Then she took the basket, opened it, and there I was, of course, right on the white napkin.

"'Oh, mamma!' cried Almeda, 'dear mamma, don't hurt the kitten, poor, poor starved kitten. Oh! mamma! strike me all you want to, but don't hurt that poor little thing. See how its weak little eyes look up at you. Oh, mamma! what if I was lost and some great big man should throw me away to starve?'

"I did not know what to do except to lie still and take what came, just as I had been obliged to do all of my life. But the mamma went out on the steps, shook me out of the basket, and kicked me downstairs. Then she called to some one in the house, and said: 'John, bring Fido here and set him on this nasty cat.' Well, I did not wait for that. I had learned all about boys and dogs together."

"You knew the combination," interrupted F. O. Fowl.

"Yes, and I ran away as fast as I could, but

I heard my little Almeda screaming at the top of her voice.

"'Mamma, you are wicked. Mamma, God will punish you,' and the slaps came down on poor Almeda. I could not do anything, so I ran away so frightened I did not know where I ran. I have seen Almeda since, but I would not show myself to her for fear she would get into trouble on my account."

We were so interested in Scat's story we had not noticed F. O. Fowl, but when we finally looked at him he was the personification of rage. Every hair was standing out as if he were charged with electricity, and he glared and snorted with his lips drawn back from his teeth as if ready for a spring.

"Show me that woman," he said; "show me that woman! I'll scratch her eyes out. Ffsst! Ffsst! ssssss——"

The room didn't seem large enough to contain the enraged explosive, and he shot down the stairs and out into the street, where we heard some boys shout: "A mad cat! A mad cat!" We knew, however, that F. O. Fowl could take care of himself and did not worry ourselves about him.

Little Scat said:

"My! did he have all of that mad because I was treated so mean?"

"Yes, indeed," said Pinkie, "he has an awful warm heart."

"My! what a good friend he would be," said Scat, with a sigh.

"Little Scat," said Muggins, "come home with me. My people may not want you, but you may stay quietly in the woodhouse, and I shall bring you plenty of food, for I always have more than I can eat, then when you get fat and good-looking some one will like you and give you a home."

"Oh! I wish I had a home!" said the little waif.

"Well, I would choose my home if I were in your place, Scat," said spoiled Columbus, "for it is not every one who will know enough to take care of you properly."

"I guess most any home would be gooder than what I have had," said the sorrowful innocent.

"Cats are not independent enough," retorted Columbus, holding his pink nose in the air and waving on high his great yellow tail.

"It is natural to see life from the standpoint of our own experience," said our President, who had descended from the rostrum and now joined us in our informal conversation. "I dare say Scat would endure many rebuffs for the sake of feeling that she had a right to some

place, and that she could rest at night in comfort, knowing that the next night would find her in the same place, or, at least, with the same people. My master tells of an ordinary-looking kitten belonging to the wife of a railroad employee that was as much at home on the cars as we are in our own homes. It had traveled continuously since its birth, and knew wherever its people were it was safe. I know, too, of a whole family of kittens which have been brought up on a railroad drawbridge. The mother had found her way to the draw when a little kitten—dropped, perhaps, by some one—and grew to maturity, a great favorite with everybody. She loved fish, and would eat one whole, and raw, and her kittens were the same kind of sailors. The whole family play near the cars as they run past, and only one has met with sorrow, and that resulted in his death. The mother has just been given to a family on shore, and adapts herself kindly to her new surroundings. Friends, it is the care we get that secures our love. I wish everybody were as happily situated as I am," Starlight concluded, with an all-embracing sigh.

After a short intermission, during which we endeavored to increase the sociability of the members, and especially to assure Scat of our desire to aid her, our President called us to order and asked for more experiences.

Just at this moment Cozy, a young, beautiful, snow-white Angora mamma kitten, walked in, looking especially happy and as proud as a queen. She had not attended since the first meeting, and, of course, she received a warm greeting.

"Cozy looks as if she had some good news to tell," said Pinkie.

"Indeed I have, my friends," said Cozy. "I am happy now, but I have been rather blue since I last saw you, but it is all gone now. My especial mistress went away, and it seemed as if she must have stayed a year, although I understand that it was only a little over a week. Anyway, I lost my appetite because I wanted her so much that I could think of nothing else. But she came back the other day, and what do you think I gave her for a present?"

No one seemed to be able to answer the question, and Cozy was so proud she could not wait for much guessing, so she said:

"Well, when my mistress came into the parlor from the cars in the evening, there I was, right under the brightly burning chandelier, in a snow-white basket, and I had two little snow-white baby kittens for my mistress. How

surprised she did look, and how she did hug and pet me! She said she was almost afraid to touch the little kittens, for they looked like little snow wreaths, and she was afraid that they would melt away. She said it wasn't often that people who went away visiting found such nice presents for them when they returned. One thing bothers me dreadfully, although I have said nothing about it to my people, and so far they don't seem to know it; at least, they have made no remarks upon the subject to me. What troubles me is that they have no eyes. They cannot see. I have one yellow eye and one blue one, so I am well supplied both in color and number. I suppose I ought not to feel badly about it if my mistress does not. Still, I wish they had eyes."

Queenie and Josephine both assured Cozy that it would be all right, and all of the others congratulated her upon making such a nice present to her people.

"It is to be hoped," said Muggins, "that when your family reaches maturity, human beings will have acquired a better knowledge of the domestic feline race, and that your kittens may benefit by the deliberations of this assembly."

"Yes, I think so, too," said sweet little Cozy, who by reason of her youth and home duties was hardly prepared to understand the language and meaning of Muggins.

GRANDPA. "RETROSPECTION"

COZY AND HER BABIES. "WHO'S COMING?"

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Then Cozy looked very sweetly at Starlight, and said: "There is some talk of calling one of them after the renowned President of this convention."

Starlight actually blushed with embarrassment and pleasure.

"Indeed," said he, "that would be an honor for which I should be very proud."

"Well, I must run home," said Cozy, "for I promised not to stay long. The Deaconess is somewhat jealous of my kittens, and I had better watch out for the little ones."

"The Deaconess? Who is she and what would she do?" queried Turvey.

"Oh, she lives where I do, and she thinks her blood is better than mine, and she always scolds me. She is a full-blooded Angora, and her hair stands right out, while mine hangs, and she is black, with a white tie and white feet, and that is why they call her the Deaconess. I have confidence that my people will see that no harm comes to my little ones, but it is just as well for me to be near in case of trouble."

"Why don't you bring the Deaconess with you?" said Columbus.

"Oh," said Cozy, "I think I should never try to make the Deaconess do anything. She won't look at anybody but her people. She is dreadfully exclusive. Good-by, folks," she said, as she slipped quietly out of the door.

"Thinks they haven't any eyes!" laughed Smiley, with his mouth open in the broadest kind of a grin. "Don't tell her any different."

Smiley always seemed ready for a joke.

During a short intermission, we regaled ourselves with refreshments and endeavored to increase the sociability of our members, and especially assure Scat of our determination to aid her in securing a home. The happy and well-fed cats endeavored to show a ravenous appetite in order to encourage the hungry friends.

After being called to order, Posey, who was a handsome black and white animal, secured recognition.

"Mr. President," said he, "I have a complaint to make. We are accused of being quarrelsome, and that is very unjust. We are brought up to follow human beings. We are supposed under the best of circumstances to be members of the family, and all of our training, when we have any, is in that direction. Human beings are understood to be the ones to whom we are most attached. We are distinctly informed that is our business. We are

taught to look upon other cats as interlopers, then how are we expected to assume toward them the jolly sentiments that human beings do to each other?

"We are not as deceptive as they," continued Posey. "I will give you an example of just one afternoon at home, and I assure you it is only one of many. When my mistress arose from her siesta that day, she said: 'Well, I have something to accomplish before dark, and I do hope no one will come in. The house is all torn up, too, and I look like Sancho. Oh, dear! There's the bell. I'd like to know what fool of a woman is coming out this rainy day. I should think she would know enough to stay at home. Oh! my dear Mrs. Perly, how delighted I am. Indeed, you were kind to brave such a storm to make this poor little, lonesome woman a visit. I hope you have brought your work, some of your lovely fancy work that I admire so much. Now do take your hat off and let us make a business of having a real nice visit. There now, let me take your wraps. It's just perfectly lovely of you to think of me; some sort of mental telepathy, you know, for I was just saying, "Oh, I do wish Mrs. Perly would come." '

"Then they sat down, and each told the other how much she had been dissipating during the week, and also the invitations she had been obliged to decline. My mistress said she had

a dreadful headache the night of the Toppington ball, and could not attend—her husband would not hear of it; and it was too late to send regrets, for she hoped up to a late hour to be able to go.

"The truth of it is, she was not invited, and I never shall forget that night, for she scolded her husband because he had not made himself intimate with Mr. Toppington, and he berated her because she had not exchanged courtesies with Mrs. Toppington. He said it would have been thousands of dollars in his pocket to have been seen at that ball. And she said: 'I don't see how in the world I am to explain to my friends my not being there.' 'I don't see,' said he, 'how your not being there is going to trouble you as much as my not being there troubles me.'

"Then they made the front of the house all dark except the hall, so that neighbors would think that they were away, and when the door-bell rang, the servant was obliged to say that they were not at home. Two of the would-be callers that night were men my master was especially anxious to see upon business; then he blamed his wife because she had not honesty enough to acknowledge that they had been left out, and to make themselves as comfortable as they could at home. He had lost a good business opportunity by not being able to see the men who called.

"Yes, my friends, you may be sure that was an uncomfortable night, and when my mistress told the headache story to Mrs. Perly, I must say that I was surprised; but, you see, it would never do for a society woman to acknowledge herself slighted. I knew my mistress was dying to get to her work. It was a dress she wanted to arrange for a dinner party, and would have no other time when she could comfortably attend to it, and did not care to employ a dressmaker for so small a task, but to hear the way she talked you would have thought that afternoon the one bright spot in her existence.

"Now, you know, my friends, we are not deceitful in that way, especially with those we love. Our deceitfulness is only in appearance. We are timid, and well we may be, from the abuse to which so many of us are subjected. We are obliged to get around quickly sometimes, or get a kick, and when we have had a few kicks we learn to watch for them, and to slip quietly out of the way, and then we are called 'sly.' People do not seem to realize that their blows cause intense pain. Our flesh is as easily hurt and bruised as that of the ten-

derest baby in the land. Because we are quiet with a jammed foot or a bruised side is no reason we are not suffering.

"Neither do we always quarrel when people think they hear us doing so. I will leave it to human beings themselves, if, when they look out of the window to throw boots and shoes at us, they find us fighting one time in ten. No, we are sitting still and getting off our own jargon. They cannot understand our language, of course, and I dare say that if some people were listening now, they would say we were having a cat fight. Ours is not the only language composed largely of inflections, and I wager we do not slap each other half as often as would so many children engaged in what they call play. We seem to be intelligent enough to understand their language, but they cannot understand ours.

"I have sat and talked with another cat a whole hour, and have been enjoying a lovely time, particularly when the night was warm and bright, when there would come a stick of wood. It's a wise, protecting care that directs a man's arm at such a time and prevents him from throwing straight. We have many things to talk about. It does no one any harm if we do gossip a little. Our stories are never translated into another language, and consequently never reach any place where harm could come from them. It is a little amusing sometimes

to discuss the peculiarities of our owners, because they act themselves before us, thinking we do not know the difference."

"What did your mistress say when Mrs. Perly left?" asked Dolly Varden, who was anxious to turn Posey back to his story.

Dolly Varden's mistress writes stories, and our pretty belle seems to have acquired a very active taste in the same direction.

"Well," answered Posey, "when the door was finally closed upon Mrs. Perly, my mistress threw herself upon a sofa, and said:

"'Oh, what a sacrifice this afternoon has

been for me! I am tired to death. It seemed as if I could find nothing to say, and I feel as if I never wanted to see another visitor, or another bit of fancy work, with its "new stitches, new stitches,." I thought she would never go.'

"I did not like to hear my mistress talk that way, when she had striven so hard to detain her visitor. Presently she spied me, and, taking me in her arms, she said:

" 'Come, Pussy Posey, let us lie down and be comfortable. I won't have to talk to you,' and she cuddled me in her arms; it was nice, and soft, and warm, and I purred her to sleep, and then went to sleep myself.

"I heard my master when he came to the door, and had my eyes upon him when he stood by the sofa.

" 'Well, puss,' he whispered, 'you've a soft snap. You look comfortable, and so does the little wife, but she looks all tired out, too.'

"Just then my mistress woke up.

" 'Why, Harry,' she said, 'when did you come?'

" 'Oh, just a minute ago,' he said. 'What makes you look so tired?'

" 'Visited too hard,' answered my mistress. 'Mrs. Perly came this afternoon with that everlasting fancy work of hers, and it's "new stitches," just as I was preparing to engage upon some especial work for myself, and she

remained all the afternoon. I thought she never would go. It was such hard work to assume so much and pretend I was so glad to see her, and to find something to talk about, that I was tired out long before she went away. Everybody else had sense enough to stay home such a day as this, consequently there was no break in the long afternoon. She could not stay to dinner. She casually remarked when she arrived that she must be home in time to have dinner properly served, for her husband expected to bring home a non-resident partner and wanted everything shipshape. After that, of course, I urged her very hard to stay to dinner.'

"'Oh, puss!' said my master, bending over and smoothing me, 'aren't you glad you are not men and women folk, to have to be so deceitful?'

"I looked up in his face and said 'Mieow,' and my mistress hugged me, and said: 'Pussy Posey actually talks as if he could understand you.'

"You see, I did understand him. Why is it that people skilled in all the arts that human beings are capable of, cultured to a degree that causes their kind to look up to them as superior beings, make use of their thousand and one deceptions? Why is it when necessity compels us to slip around quietly, both to obtain food and to keep away from unjust kicks and cuffs,

we are called 'sly,' and 'deceitful'? That which may seem sly in us is simply born of necessity, and I am sure human beings have no such excuse."

"My mistress," said Dolly Varden, "is very busy always, but she is not deceitful, and she does not put on airs. She always treats everybody well, just as long as possible. I wish she had more time to play with me. She often stops when she is very busy with her writing or painting to play with me just to make me happy, but I could play hide and seek much longer than she can. No, my mistress is not deceitful."

There were several who gave like accounts of their people, and some who had unpleasant remembrances of experiences such as Posey told.

"I was very much interested in one exhibition of deceit which I witnessed," said Banjo. "It was not my mistress who was deceitful, but a relative who was calling upon her. The young lady in question came with the young man whom she was anxious to secure for a husband, and she resorted to all sorts of wiles to make him believe that she was a better educated person that she was. My mistress sang beautifully, and understood music, and, having just purchased a new song, gave it to the lady guest to read the words, knowing that the relative could not read music; but my mistress

was surprised to see the lady nod her head, and hum, and go through the motions of reading and singing the music, as if she were an expert. Then she handed back the music, and said with enthusiasm: 'Yes, it is very pretty.' "

"Say, sisters," said Columbus, "that is one way to catch a fellow, isn't it? Did she get him?"

"Yes, and that is not the only thing in which she deceived her husband," answered Banjo mysteriously, but he would give no information as to what he meant.

"I tell you what it is," said Do-Si-Do. "Young ladies are the limit in deceitfulness. If some of the young men could see my mistress when she gets up in the morning, scowling and fretting, and mad about getting up, and putting on any old thing, with her hair looking forty ways for Sunday, they wouldn't think her so charming as they do. She hasn't got much hair, and she has to pin all sorts of wigs upon her head, and she powders, and paints, and pads all over, and has her dresses made to hide her defects in such a way that she does not seem like the same woman in the parlor and on the street that dragged her sloppy self out of bed in the morning."

"Well," said Tartar, who belonged to a young man who kept bachelor's apartments, "I think that the young ladies are no worse than the young men. Our rooms smell like a

tobacco factory, and my master's face is all scowled up until it looks like a nutmeg melon. He grunts, and swears, and throws things around, and jaws at everybody and everything. I usually pretend to be sound asleep, and I never make much of an appearance until he is dressed and has had his breakfast. Then he seems inclined to pet me a little, and get himself in order to go out and look up some rich girl to marry. But no one would marry him if she knew what I know about him. Then it is awfully funny how the tailors change a man's looks.

"My master is thin and scrawny, with no shoulders to speak of, and by the time he has all of the padding on in the shape of coat and vest, you wouldn't know him. Men will endure any amount of heat in order to have their shoulders seem broad. Dear me, if human beings were born with their clothes all on the way we are, what a lot of labor it would save them!"

"Well, I don't know," said George, "it's an awful bother to launder your clothes on you the way we have to. I think if I had my way, I would like to get my clothes in the tub once in a while. It is such dreadful work to get at my back."

"There is some truth in George's complaint," said Leon. "Our people ought to comb us, for we cannot help ourselves in some particulars,

especially in the matter of keeping our backs clean. That is the reason that cats get the mange; they cannot keep their backs from touching places where diseased dogs and cats have been, and they must suffer because of some one's carelessness. We like to be clean, and I should think our people would help us enough to give us a good combing every day."

We were having a real gossipy time when Carmine gained recognition. Carmine is large and fine-looking, deep yellow in color, turning almost to red upon his back. He was deeply interested and had attended all of the meetings.

"I wish to raise my voice," said he, "against the way some cats are fed, or, rather, not fed. I have suffered all the pangs of starvation. Yes, I am aware that I am not exceedingly thin now, but with me most of the time it is feast or famine. Generally the only time that I am comfortable is when my mistress is doing her own work."

"Why, how is that?" asked Eulalie?

"Just this way," answered Carmine. "The majority of house servants do not care to bother with us, they have their work to manage, think we are a nuisance, and the mandate, 'Don't forget to feed the kittie,' goes in one ear and out of the other. The minute my mistress leaves the kitchen, most kitchen girls

give me a kick, open the door, and say, 'Scat,' as if I had the smallpox."

"May I interrupt?" asked Sundown.

"Certainly," said Carmine sarcastically. "I know it is a joke, so I shall sit down and enjoy it."

"When you said 'Scat,'" said Sundown, "it put me in mind of a joke I once heard, and I wish all who have the hateful word so pat upon their tongue had the affliction of the man I mention. This is the story:

"A store cat in a small town was in the habit of resting upon papers, bags, or beans, just as she found the most comfortable, and from being teased forty or fifty times a day came to develop a hasty temper. She did not enjoy a slap, or a pinch, or to have her hair pulled, any more than anybody else. A man who stammered very badly lounged into the store one day, and, standing up by pussy, commenced to pull her tail and tease her generally. Puss had had enough of this harlequin work, and, concluding to give one man a lesson, she curled herself over his hand, and with the nails of paws and feet made in it some incisions deep and strong, and sprang away.

"The afflicted man commenced to say 'S-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-scat,' while the cat kept going, and by the time he had finished the hateful word and added, 'You demon,' the cat was two blocks away."

Sundown was very dramatic in his delivery, and we all enjoyed the story.

"Served him right," squeaked Polly Wog.

"He will know better next time," said Pinkie.

"Know better," piped little Scat, who thought it her duty to agree with all the statements of her friends.

It was some time before we were quieted and Carmine allowed to resume his remarks.

"How can anybody thrive," he continued, "when he has no meals one day, one meal next day, nothing the next, and three meals the day after?"

"That is better than no meals for a week at a time," groaned Polly Wog.

"Better than no meals," whined little Scat weakly.

There was much desultory conversation before Carmine was allowed to proceed.

"Then probably no human being knows what we suffer for want of water. We require water just as much as other animals, and probably we get the least. Dogs have their revenge upon the human family by going mad. Even the press has come to the relief of canines by urging their need of water, and favoring low basins at the fountains for their use. Of course, we are agile enough to climb any place that a dog can, but we are often shut in storerooms and cellars, to

catch mice, and we get so thirsty that we cannot think of mice or anything else. We also need occasionally a little salt meat; at least, we require a little salt, all animals do, and sometimes the human hand is licked by dogs and cats for the salt that exudes therefrom. This seems to me a point to be considered in the care of cats. There are cat books to be had, but the trouble is that, as a general thing, only owners of high-bred cats take the trouble to read a book regarding the well-being of our race."

"Doubtless your mistress has been without a servant lately," said Smiley.

"Indeed she has," said Carmine, with a broad grin, "and if it were not that she gets so tired, I would rejoice. Brother Smiley, you are judging by my good condition, I perceive."

"Yes," said Smiley, in a still broader grin, his bright eyes redeeming his plain general exterior.

"Well," continued Carmine, "we shall have a new kitchen servant come to-morrow, and one week from now you just see what I look like. Still, I have a little hope, for yesterday my mistress said to her husband:

"'I don't believe my domestics half feed Carmine; see how sleek and fat he is when I care for him. Always, too, when I am alone he is around with me and follows me, but it is seldom that I can find him when I have household help.'

"Well, I rubbed around her and arched my back and looked just as cheerful and pretty as I could, and then she said:

"'You dear old fellow, I shall try and see that you are not abused. I wish you could talk and tell me what they do to you when I am not with you.'

"I hope she will keep her word, but, with all her kindness, she does not give me the water that I need and that I sometimes suffer for."

"I agree with Carmine," said Muggins, "regarding the universal forgetfulness or ignorance continuously present with the dominant race, with reference to the necessity co-existent with all animals for the best, purest, and most satisfying refreshment of all time, water."

"I want water two or three times a day," said Pinkie modestly.

"So do I," acquiesced Columbus, "and you would better believe that I have it, too."

"I could drink more than I get," said Turvey.

"And I, too," added Smiley, "although in my condition I feel as if it were almost disloyal to say even that much against the care that I have."

"It is one of the least remembered of our wants," said Josephine, "although at our house we have a dog, and, as a basin of water is always kept for him, I need not suffer in that particular. To tell you the truth, however, I would rather have my own clean little dish, for

I don't enjoy drinking after a dirty dog, that chews overripe bones and bites other dogs. and because human beings do not regard Still, because of the general comfort of my life, cleanliness as much as we do, and do not understand how extremely dainty we are in that direction, we may be thankful if we get water in any way."

"I cannot tell how much I have suffered for water," said Stand-Pat. "We cannot drink when we are not thirsty, and because we refuse sometimes, people think that we never want it."

"Only when it is raining and I go out in the street and drink from the freshly formed pools is my thirst satisfied," said Eulalie. "I cannot

drink the dirty water that stands long in the street or that lodges in the various receptacles about the place. Often I could drink milk and eat my solid food better if I had water at first to quench my thirst."

"It is too bad," said Gold-Bug, "that even the kindest of our owners do not think of this necessity of every created thing. My mistress will ask her stupid, insensate geraniums if they are thirsty, and give them a drink, when my tongue is almost creaking, and she changes the water for the gold fish with scrupulous regularity."

"Why don't you eat the gold fish and drink the water they are in, too?" asked Polly Wog.

"Oh," laughed Gold-Bug, "my people do not trust me alone with them. I dare say the fish would be good, but I don't want to drink the water they have slipped around in."

"It is better than none," squeaked Polly Wog.

"Oh, yes," answered Gold-Bug, "and if occasion offered when I was very, very thirsty, I would take the water, but I guess it would not be just right to steal the fish."

"Huh," growled Polly Wog contemptuously.

It was understood at the convention that the "happy cats," as our President called those who were prosperous and well cared for, were not to pursue an argument with the unfortunate ones, and were not to take umbrage at any of

their unhappy exhibitions of temper, so Gold-Bug, without noticing Polly Wog's exclamation, said:

"Surely nothing takes the place of water, and human beings seem to recognize that fact for all animals with which they are brought in contact, except cats."

"My mistress often gives me remnants of the salt mackerel that have been left upon the breakfast table," said Tyrol, "and about half-past ten I am so thirsty I would be glad of even a pool of water in the street, but I am shut in the store room to catch mice, and really am so thirsty I can't think of mice. Even if I should catch and eat one, the blood would only increase my thirst."

"It seems to me," I said, "that the present conversation points very strongly to one important subject for a resolution."

"Seems to me, too," said weak little Scat.

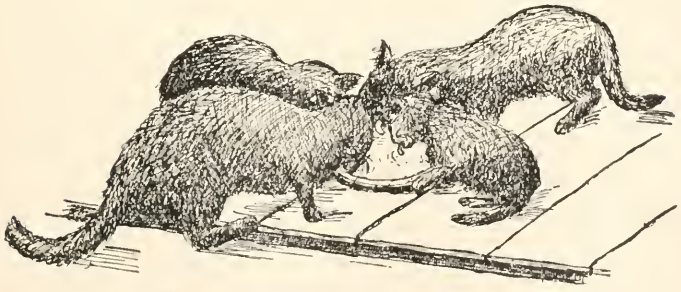
"Our Secretary and little Scat are right," said Bonnie kindly, "and as one of the committee upon resolutions I think that I can assure them that the subject will certainly find place in the list."

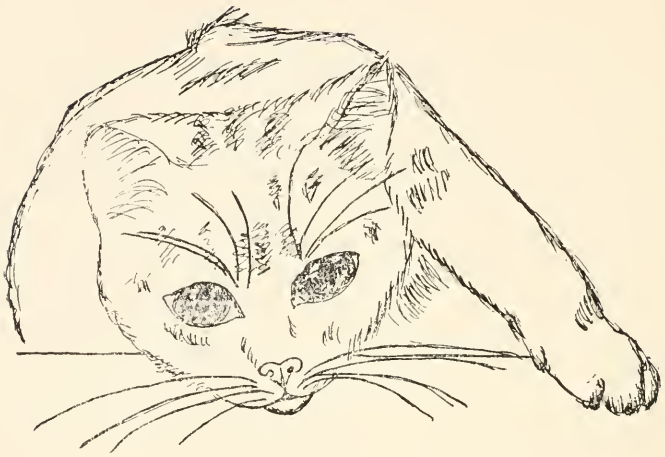
"I now have the pleasure of announcing to you," said our President, rising in his place, "that we have among us one, who, although he has seldom been heard from in our consultations, is a student and a thinker, and some time ago I asked him to prepare a scientific pa-

per upon the status of the cat in the physical and mental world. This paper, I am glad to announce, will be in readiness for hearing at our next meeting. At that time I shall present to your kind attention Leslie, our student. Leslie's home is in a minister's family, and the head of the house is a broad student and a highly cultured man. He is a man of most gentle instincts, and nothing is allowed to suffer under his care. The minister is deeply read, and Leslie may have access to many books that are in few homes. A motion to adjourn will now be in order, for the clocks announce the near approach of twelve."

The motion was carried, and we departed full of curiosity as to the coming paper.

END OF THE FOURTH SESSION.



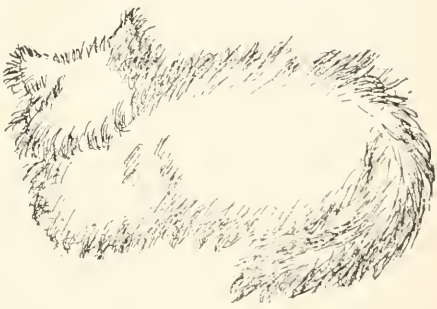


FIFTH DAY.

When repairing to our fifth meeting, Starlight and I met upon the way, and after the usual interchange of greetings, he said:

"I think all of us are receiving much benefit from this convention. I should be glad could we add a little more to the comfort of our unfortunate ones. It has been a serious question with me how we could reach Polly Wog to better his condition. He seems to feel insulted when we proffer assistance. There are many other cats present also who, I know, are suffering, but who have been suppressed so long they dare not advance an opinion even with us. My hope is, that they may presently learn to know their own importance, and, learning

the importance, assert and conduct themselves in such a manner as to secure kindlier recognition. I have great hopes from the paper to be read before us to-day. I am acquainted with the sources of Leslie's knowledge, and know he has made good use of them. I predict that you will all be delighted. He asked me as to the language to use, and said the natural language might be above the heads of some of our cats, but I assured him that I thought one style of language would be understood as well as the other."



Starlight has such a dry way of saying things sometimes that one cannot tell whether or not he knows that he is perpetrating a joke. He looked unconscious, and the best thing for me under the circumstances was to look the same way.

"It is strange," said I, "that I have not noticed Leslie among the members. I do not even know him by sight."

"Not at all strange," answered Starlight. "Your duties are such that you cannot be thinking of every one in the convention, cats, too, that are perhaps as bright as many we have heard from. Leslie is white, with large pale yellow or pinkish spots. He is soft, slow,

graceful, and has not been present at all of our meetings."

Just then we arrived at our destination, and found nearly all of our friends assembled and eagerly asking each other: "Who is Leslie?" and, "Where is Leslie?"

Starlight was delighted that there was so much interest expressed, and we commenced the session in a joyful mood, but we were sobered by a little episode that, while it made us sad, furnished the subject of another resolution for us to give to the world.

Tige, a soft, gray, friendly, affectionate cat, and one who made friends wherever he was if he wished to, came in and sat down, looking very disconsolate.

"Tige, you look unhappy," said Sweetness. "Is anything the matter?"

"Yes," said he, "I'm given away." Then he held his head down and we noticed that he was very thin.

"What for?" said Sweetness.

"Nothing. Just nothing at all," said Tige. "I had fleas, but I couldn't help it. I had no way of getting rid of them. I heard them talking about the fleas, but I thought they liked me too well to give me away just for a few old fleas, when they could have combed them off from me just as well as not. I was always loving to them all, and to the neighbors, and I always answered when they spoke to me. I

couldn't have helped it anyway. I always tried to do just right. And now they have turned me away from home. No other place will ever seem like home, and no people will be to me like my own people. Some way or other it makes me feel as if I had been guilty of some crime. You see I loved my people, and I have not eaten a bite since I was given away."

"What made you let them give you away?" said our independent Columbus. "If any one should try to take me away from my people I would scratch his eyes out. They are the best people in the world."

There were some objections to his statement as to superiority, but Starlight, Dolly Varden and some of the others said nothing for reasons known to themselves, while each had the "best owners in the world."

"Well," said Tige, in answer to Columbus, "how did I know what they were going to do with me? My! how I would like to see Elta."

"Who is Elta?" asked Eulalie.

"The little girl of our house," answered poor Tige, and he drew a long sigh, as if there were nothing in the world for him but misery.

"Try to like the people you are with now," said Josephine; "perhaps they may be so good to you they will not give you away."

"I don't know how I shall like my home yet. I have not eaten anything since I was taken there. It seems as if I could never eat again.

I want to see my folks again so bad. Even the neighbors there used to talk to me, and one lady who loved cats used to plant catnip in her yard especially for me, and I always visited with her when she was in her garden. Oh! if I just could see *any* of them!"

Poor Tige humped down on the floor with his head hanging, and he looked as if his heart was broken.

"You just tell me where the folk live that gave you away, and I will go and howl under their window until they find something worse than fleas to keep them awake," said F. O. Fowl.

Everybody looked encouragingly at F. O. Fowl as if he had said the right thing.

"I tell you what it is," said Columbus, "if my people had served me such a trick as that I should think I was in luck to get rid of them."

"I agree with Columbus," said Bonnie.

"Tige," said our President, "try it a little while, eat if possible, then let us know how you feel in two weeks. If you don't feel better then, we will lead you back to your old home."

"No, siree," said F. O. Fowl, "don't do that, because if they don't want him they might kill him."

A shudder went around the room at that, and we were glad of a pleasant interruption.

Tom and Dottie, who had attended several of our meetings and were plump and well-fed

cats, and seemed to enjoy life to the full, just then made their appearance, and were proud of the fact that they had just had their pictures taken. We crowded around to see them, and we were delighted with them, and pleased to think more of our number were gaining recognition in the photographic world, and were of enough consequence in their families to have their pictures taken. I have noticed that it is in the nice homes that these things are done.

"Dottie, what's the matter with your fur?" asked Columbus, in his outspoken way. We had all noticed something unusual in her coat, but did not think it polite to say anything about it.

Dottie laughed a little; she is always good-natured, and then she explained:

"Well, when my mistress, my especial mistress—for I have eight or nine of them—heard that the photographer was coming she wanted me nice and white, and she washed me, and," here Dottie laughed again, "my coat would not dry in time. She rubbed me in blankets and tried to dry me in every way possible, but it was no use. Don't I look like a little sheep?" she asked with a giggle.

"That would be a lamb, you know, Dottie," said Tom indulgently.

"Yes, that is right," said Dottie. "Tom knows language."

The two were great friends, and enjoyed

their home. The man of the house had traveled extensively and could speak all sorts of languages, and gave everybody that he had anything to do with plenty to eat and wear. The family was large and Tom and Dottie always had a good time.

Then Tom, looking at the photographs, said:

"Don't you think that Dottie makes a pretty picture?"

"Not half as pretty as Tom," insisted Dottie kindly and earnestly. "Tom poses so well," she continued.

"My people helped me to pose, and I am glad that everybody likes the pictures," said Tom. "I think, Mr. President, that we have taken up enough time from the paper we are to have."

But just then sweet Topaz had something to show and to talk about.

"Here, dear ones," said he, "is a picture that my mistress let me take. She has had it about a year. It is a picture of my beautiful mother, Lady Plume, and of my full brother, Buster, who is a year older. He is a splendid big cat now, and people say that I look like him. I have not been very well, and it seems as if I did not grow very fast, but my mistress is only waiting for me to get in good condition, when she will have several photographs taken of me. Aren't my mother and my brother pretty? Of course, they do not live here, and they cannot come to this convention, and will miss very

LADY PLUME AND BUSTER. "WHAT'S THAT?"

COZY'S BABY. "WHERE'S MAMMA?"

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much, but they may read the report, perhaps."

Of course, we crowded around and admired the pictures, and we did not blame Topaz for being proud of them. We conversed about them some time, and asked where they lived, and heard about their dispositions, and then Topaz, who was very thoughtful for one so young, said:

"Now that we are to have that paper, I shall have the pictures here so you may see them after Leslie has finished."

Topaz was a little darling. His eyes looked right into ours with such an appealing, pathetic look that he won all of our hearts. He sat down quietly near Dolly Varden, and our President immediately introduced the speaker.

"My friends," said he, "I am happy to introduce to your good graces my friend, Leslie, of Browning Square."

Leslie came forward and immediately proceeded with his paper, which, for obvious reasons, was a talk.

"I am greatly indebted," said he, "to St. George Mivart for facts relating to our race. This scientist has seen fit to write fully upon this subject, and, although previous to my search among the archives of literature in this line I felt we were much superior to the generally received opinion in this country concerning us, after studying the book from which the greater part of my notes are taken, I felt my

self-respect growing to such an alarming degree that, to restore my so-called normal condition, I ran into the kitchen and stole some meat, and was chased out of doors by the cook. My mistress is very good, and was so astonished at my audacity she did not have presence of mind to interfere immediately. At length she said:

"'Why, my Leslie, you never did such a thing before, and I know you must be hungry. Katy, see that puss is well fed with good food, meat and milk, and whatever else he wants, whether I am here or not.' There was already one good result, you see. Well, the chasing out of doors took a little of the conceit out of me, and I hope I am in a suitable frame of mind to talk to you without showing how large my bump of self-esteem has been.

"I have gleaned from the book I have mentioned and from various leaflets and magazine articles of undoubted authority, and now give a brief résumé with the quotations.

"The domestic cat of the present age is not, as usually supposed, the tamed cat of the forest and jungle, but a descendant of the Egyptian cat, whose liberty was protected and whose freedom was royal.

"To the Egyptians the cat was an emblem of the sun. Its eyes were supposed to vary in appearance with the course of that luminary, and to undergo a change each lunar month,

on which account the animal was also sacred to the moon. In Egypt it was an object of worship and the venerated inmate of certain temples. At Beni Hassan, a temple of 1500 B. C. is dedicated to Pasht, the Goddess of Cats. At this place there are thousands of cat mummies, which proves that ancient civilization believed in a spiritual and material resurrection for cats. Herodotus says: 'When a cat dies a natural death in a home, the Egyptians shave their eyebrows, and when a fire occurs they are more anxious to save the cats than to extinguish the conflagration.'

"It is supposed that from Egypt the domestic cat was introduced into Greece, and thence into Rome. The ruins of Pompeii disclose a fresco painting of a cat. Although known in India three thousand years ago, the Hebrews did not know it as a domestic animal. However, it was a household pet in Europe before the Christian era. During the middle ages heavy fines were imposed upon cat killers in Wales, Switzerland, Saxony and other European countries."

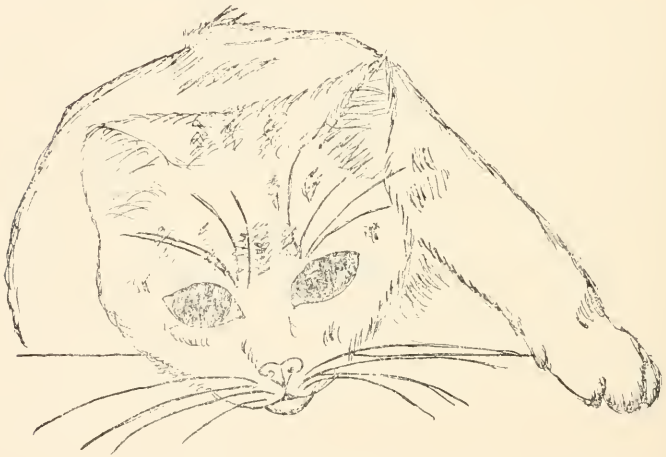
"In that particular, then," said Muggins, "the boasted civilization of the twentieth century is an unmitigated farce."

"Not entirely," said Leslie, "because some of the members of this convention give proof that civilization still lives."

"In spots," snapped F. O. Fowl.

"I told you so," said Columbus. "I told you

that we ought to stand up for our rights. I remember very well, in Egypt, three or four thousand years ago, when I had a temple all to myself, and one hundred men and women to wait upon me. I had pale blue satin cushions stuffed with thistledown and embroidered with silver and precious stones, and changed every day, and they used to cultivate birds and white mice for my food."



During this astounding assertion half of our members had been partly rising to their feet, and F. O. Fowl was actually humping his back a little, and he emitted a long-drawn—

"Whe-e-e-e-e-e-w!" which would have called forth Columbus' ire had he cared for anything or anybody.

"My!" said Scat, dropping her little under-jaw and forgetting to bring it up again.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" Pinkie sighed.

"That is an unheard of assertion!" exclaimed Bonnie.

Dolly Varden looked wise, as if the statement were in accordance with her intuitions all along. She felt the inward consciousness of having been worshiped at some time in the past. She looked every inch a queen, anyway.

"Sometimes it comes to me in a dim, uncertain way," said Muggins majestically, "that I have lived other lives and have seen the light of other days remote from this in time and in environments, that warm winds have sought me out under waving palms, and no hands were lifted against me, my days and nights were full of independence, soft repose and wondrous beauty; that music of harp, and cymbal, and——"

"Starlight remembers it, too," said Columbus, nonchalantly interrupting Muggins' growing rhapsody. "His temple was next to mine; it was white within and without, and decorated almost entirely with pearls and opals. He had a diamond necklace."

"Huh," groaned Polly Wog.

No one minded poor Polly Wog.

"Oh, my!" peeped little Scat.

"Well, I never," said Smiley.

Then silent amazement took the place of ejaculations, and inquiring glances were cast at the President.

"Perhaps, just now," he said, "we would better not pursue this theory any further, but listen to the paper which is before us. The subject opened by our friend, Columbus, presents a field too wide, I am afraid, for our discussion, and one which the world in general is not ready to accept."

"The Angora breed," continued Leslie, "to which belong our worthy President and several other members in a more or less degree, is supposed to be Asiatic, and, indeed, is also called Persian. This breed has furnished the pets of luxurious homes for ages. Domestic cats, while differing in color, do not differ in anatomical construction."

"We differ in size materially, do we not?" asked Plato.

"Our difference in size is almost entirely the result of cultivation, of the care—including food and so forth—which we receive. Absolutely intelligent care for a few generations will produce cats of large size, fine instincts and active intelligence. With our cousins, the lion, the tiger, leopard, and many other species to the number of forty, we have nothing to do. They are at liberty to take care of themselves, we are not. Long habitation with man has so attached us to the human family that we never, in all probability, will live away from it.

"We domestic cats are called Angora, Persian and common cats, and are of various col-

ors, as you may well see here in our convention hall. We are judged by our sizes, coats, capacities for hunting and especial dullness or general brilliancy.

"Let us see what position we occupy in the animal world. The animal kingdom is divided into two great divisions, the vertebrate and the invertebrate. We belong to the vertebrate, because we have a backbone, and it is a good, strong, flexible one, too. Of that division we belong to the great class mammalia, because we give birth to our young and nourish them from our bodies. Of the great class mammalia we belong to the order carnivora, because we eat flesh, or meat. Of this order carnivora we belong to the genus 'Felis,' a name which I take the liberty of believing comes from the Latin for 'happy.' The word 'cat' comes originally from the Greek katta, Latin catus, old German chazza, and lastly the softer French, chat. In old English it is spelled with two t's, catt.

"The ordinary wild cat, the inhabitant of woods in this country and elsewhere, is the *Felis catus,* while we are the *Felis maniculata.* .

"If our owners should try to domesticate a wildcat from the woods of America, they would not be pleased with the result, for the animal would be a wildcat still, though held in captivity to the third and fourth generation."

"I knew they were no relatives of ours," said Columbus. "They are not our style."

"Not our style," piped little Scat, turning her thin mite of a nose toward Leslie, and not seeing the smile that flickered over the kind faces around.

"I'd like to see that woman that kicked poor little Scat downstairs get a wildcat after her once," said F. O. Fowl. "And I wish the man that put out Polly Wog's eye had a wildcat on his back this minute," he continued.

Polly Wog moved a little uneasily, as if he did not know what to do with sympathy, while Scat sighed confidentially, "My ain't he good!"

"After mentioning some of the physical perfections of the race," continued Leslie, "our author says: 'Cats, then, are carnivora par excellence, and they carry out the type of their order to the highest known and most perfectly harmonious expression. But cats are not only such highly developed carnivora, something may be said in favor of their being the highest of mammals.' "

"Of course," said Columbus, in a matter of fact voice.

"Course," whispered Scat, whose head had commenced to nod over the long words.

" 'Involuntary activity and sensitiveness are the especial characteristics of animal life, and with both of these powers cats are largely endowed.' Continuing, our author says, 'We have

recognized the perfection of their organs of movement, and that of the very substance of their bones and muscles, as well as the great perfection of their especial senses. The organism of the cat tribe may then be deemed superior, because it is not only excellent in itself, but because it is fitted to dominate the excellence of other beasts.' "

"Get out of the way, you dogs," interrupted F. O. Fowl.

Scat had sunk down in sleep almost upon Pinkie's paws, but at the word, "dogs," she partly raised her head, whined "Dogs," saw none of her natural enemies present, closed her half-opened watery blue eyes, and drawing a little comfortable sigh composed herself to sleep again.

"Thus considered," continued the speaker, "the carnivora would rank first among mammals, and the cats would rank first among carnivora. Our author says, in effect, that man must be viewed in the light of an intellectual being, and as an animal with a certain organization.

"Considered merely in his capacity as an animal, man has a very definite place, but it is by no means certain that his place is at the summit. 'No more complete example of a perfectly organized living being can well be formed than that supplied by a member of what has no inconsiderable claim to be regarded as

the highest mammalian family, the family of Felidæ.' "

"Better, and more of it," said Columbus, really interested.

"It is well for all cats to hear that," said Dolly Varden.

"It's the human beings who need to hear it," said Columbus; "they have been densely ignorant of our superiority. Go on, speaker."

"Allow me again to quote directly from the author," continued Leslie. " 'We cannot, of course, without becoming cats, understand the cat mind. Yet common sense abundantly suffices to assure us that it really has certain affinities of its own. Indeed, the cat seems to be a much more intelligent animal than is commonly supposed. That it has very distinct feelings of pleasure or pain and keen, especial senses will probably be disputed by none. Its sense of touch is very delicate; its eyes are highly organized, and can serve it almost in the dark, and its hearing is extremely acute.' "

"Well, rather," said F. O. Fowl.

"Certainly," said Pinkie.

Renewing his talk, Leslie said:

" 'It is obvious,' continued our author, 'that external and internal sensations, more or less similar to those external and internal sensations of ours by which we instinctively move from place to place, judge of distance and direction, and perceive resistance and pressure,

must be possessed by the cat also. Were it otherwise trees could not be readily ascended and descended by dexterous combinations of vigorous, yet delicately adjusted springs and grapplings, nor could small apertures be passed through, in the admirable way in which all these complexly coördinated movements are effected by the animal in question.' "

"Fine language," said Muggins.

"Too much language," protested Pinkie.

"It suits me, it is what I am used to," said Katrina.

"Used to," sighed Scat, as she cuddled her nose more closely under her little paws.

" 'The ease and grace of motion of the cat,' " continued Leslie, quoting, " 'and its neat dexterity are common subjects of praise. Who has not observed how cleverly a cat will avoid objects in its path, walking perhaps on a table set with glasses and ornaments in a very unstable equilibrim, without overturning any of them?' "

"No trick at all," said Carmine.

"Certainly not," remarked Dolly Varden disdainfully.

" 'Every one knows, also,' " continued Leslie, still quoting, " 'the great facility with which a cat so turns in falling as almost always to alight safely upon its feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Columbus. "I guess we do. My master put me up one time where it

was too narrow for me to stand, and when I fell, I alighted on my feet, and one foot with all the nails out was on his nose, ha, ha! And you would better believe there was a good big gash there, and he had to wear a plaster on it for some time. He didn't try the same trick again. You may believe I give them lessons, I do."

"I would like to see you try that in some houses," said Peek-a-Boo.

"I guess you would come out of the little end of the horn," said F. O. Fowl.

"I guess you would take a walk out in the cold, cold world," said Stand-Pat.

"The animal's ordinary locomotion," continued Leslie, "is a walk or spring. It rarely runs, save when it is pursued, or alarmed, and then it progresses by a series of bounds. When driven to it, it can swim, though it takes to water, or even endures a mere wetting, with the greatest reluctance. Yet a cat has been seen voluntarily to enter a small stream several times, in order to rescue its kittens which have fallen into it."

"No trick at all," said our incorrigible Co-

lumbus. "I like water, I play in it, but I propose to get in it when I please, not when others please."

Leslie smiled in the direction of Columbus, but continued his talk.

"Our author," said he, "distinctly asserts the possession by our race of memory, imagination, a power of perception and of drawing conclusions. They are credited by various authors with a highly developed sense of direction."

"I guess your author would think so, if he could realize to how great a distance we cats wander some evenings," said Pretty.

"I have returned to my home three times when my people have given me away," said Darling, "and each time from a different direction, and from a distance of not less than two miles."

"What did they give you away for?" asked Pinkie sympathetically.

"Oh, I ate chickens, little fellows; they're good. Our people were suburbanites, until they exhausted themselves in trips to and from the city. Then chickens didn't pay, you know," here Darling laughed knowingly, "and our people concluded to move back to civilization. That suited me well enough, for I have any amount of friends in my old neighborhood, and as there are no chickens to catch, I am their own darling puss again, and so wonderful, 'because I came

back to them three times.' No funning, however, my dear cats, I was very much attached to my family, and it seems as if it would have broken my heart to stay away from them."

"Could you not have corrected the appetite for chickens?" asked Josephine in a calm, judicial tone.

"Possibly, but it would have been hard work, especially when they kept Plymouth Rocks. I don't care for black Spanish, their meat don't look good. Still, had I learned in time that they objected to my taking the chickens, I might have tried to break myself of the habit; at least, I could have been more careful as to letting them find out about it. Youthful poultry is very alluring. But no one argued with me or showed me the error of my way, or even apprised me of the nature of the charge against me, but simply said: 'Kittie, you must go,' and put me in a bag and took me to unknown fields. It was after we had moved back to the city that I heard them say: 'We have no chickens now for Darling to kill, and we may let him stay.'

"I felt like saying, 'Why didn't you explain the difficulty to me sooner?' Sometimes I had been many days finding my way back, and would be pretty nearly starved before I reached home. Once I was such a forlorn looking object that they did not recognize me at first, and endeavored to drive me from the yard, but little

Lois, the five-year-old girl, knew me, and insisted upon having her 'klippie.' "

"I guess you love Lois," said Pinkie.

"Love Lois?" asked Darling. "Why shouldn't I? She's the sweetest child on earth."

There was a general disagreement with the statement, and there were cries of "No, she is not;" "I know a sweeter," "My Mossie is lovelier," "My Dorothy knows more," "My Evetta is handsomer."

Columbus and Polly Wog both looked on indifferently, but F. O. Fowl was humping his back, all ready to protect the weakest.

Starlight smiled, and finally said:

"My friends, it seems with all of your troubles there are many human beings that you love. Your exhibition of warmth in the matter of love for your own people amuses me much but pleases me more. It shows, too, that good-hearted, refined children, are more apt than others to be tender of animals dependent upon them, for I recognize the names you mention, and know the homes from which you come. This diversion ought to put us in good humor with each other and with the world. I see in F. O. Fowl's erect fur simply a desire to protect the weakest. I read in Polly Wog's indifference the hopeless story of his

life, while Columbus' indifference is still the story of his happy, petted, and care-free existence. Will Leslie continue?"

Leslie bowed acquiescence and continued:

"'In addition to all of these recognitions of objects and of the relation between them, cats possess strong passions, and often at least, affectionate feelings of personal attachment.'"

"I should think so," said Darling.

"Think so," mimicked sleepy Scat, who by this time had opened one eye, and was stretching out one little paw as an accompaniment to a tiny yawn.

"I guess we never forget those whom we have reason to know as our friends," interposed Eulalie.

"And we don't forget our enemies, either," said F. O. Fowl, "and the enemy of one of our race is the enemy of all."

"He is a dear," commented Pinkie kindly.

"Dear," piped Scat.

"It will be unnecessary for me to go into a technical description of our anatomy," said Leslie. "Suffice it to say, that no animal, except man, has as complete command of his body as we have, and man excels us only in the use of his hands. We are handicapped in that particular with stubby finger tips, and long nails that do not allow us to exhibit the dexterity our brains suggest.

"As long as we are obliged to defend our-

selves from enemies, and procure our food by hunting, I presume we must submit to our useful claws, although they are very much in the way of our advancing in civilization. Our long so-called 'tushes' will also disappear when we do not have to rend large portions of food; and with claws and tushes gone, we can drink from cups as human beings do."

"I try it occasionally now," said Columbus, "but it won't work."

"We ought to be glad if we get enough to lap," said Smiley.

"Get enough to lap," whispered Scat.

"Huh! I forgot," said F. O. Fowl, darting away, returning in a minute and laying a nice piece of fresh beef between Scat's forepaws, "I brought this for you," said he, "and then forgot all about it."

We would have felt like rebuking F. O. Fowl for interrupting proceedings, but Scat needed all she could get to cover her little bones, even though a slight improvement had taken place since her first appearance. We indulged in a little general conversation until Scat finished her lunch, and were about to proceed with the paper, when the waif stepped out from Pinkie's protecting care, sat down near the rostrum, and looking up at our President, said:

"Lonesome, so lonesome, not even a home,
Nothing to eat, not even a bone;
  Here in a barn, with cats all agreed,
I find some good friends,
  And a first-class good feed."

"Hoop la!" said Columbus, turning a somersault, "entertaining poets unawares. Poetry is just what I like. I think I'll ask you to call on me after this, Scat."

We often wonder if the conceit ever will be taken out of Columbus.

But Scat was too comical. She sat there waiting for a word from Starlight, while Growler actually wagged his tail, gave a kittenish jump to the round of a ladder and composed himself to listen. We thought right away that our convention was conducive of some good if Growler could spread his grim visage into a smile.

"We are delighted with you, Scat," said Starlight, for she was still waiting for the word of commendation, "and I am positive that with your talent and sweet disposition it will not be long before you have a nice home."

"A nice home," echoed Scat weakly, and returning to Pinkie, she cuddled down by that indulgent friend.

"If it were not for consuming too much of your time," resumed Leslie, "I would like to give you Mivart's proof of the nearness of our construction in bone, muscle, and nerves to that of man. I would like to quote more largely, that you might learn from his own language the decisions of himself and brother scientists regarding the high order, not only of our phys-

ical, but of our mental endowments. It would be a poor type of human being that would be evolved, were he subjected to the course of treatment from which we suffer.

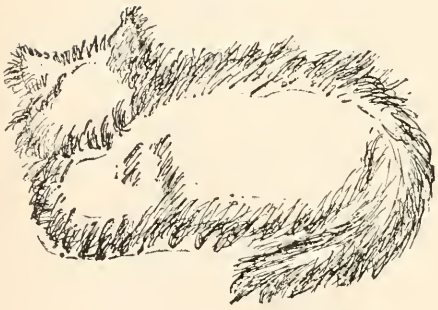
"It would seem as if I were trying to make my position ridiculous, by what I am to say, were I not able to assure you that it is gleaned from Mivart, Herbert Spencer, and Mr. Lewes. Acording to Mr. Spencer, instinct is a higher development of reason, which it has replaced, owing to a more perfect connection between inner relations and outer relations than exists where more reason is concerned. Mr. Lewes regards it as a lapsed intelligence brought about by the logic of feeling.

"All of this from such good authority ought to arouse within our minds a more earnest desire to learn our place in nature, and to learn our possibilities. Most human beings recognize our possession of wonderful instinct, but they have never paused to investigate the amount of intelligence we possess nor to develop that intelligence.

"We are supposed to be remarkably well cared for when we are simply housed and fed, and it has occurred to me that the exhibition of so-called 'trick cats' may eventually arouse the lagging intellects of our masters to a consideration of our now latent powers, and the need of care in connection with those powers.

"Mr. President, while this is the briefest possible summary regarding our material existence, it is, perhaps, as much as may be digested at one meeting. I am very thankful that I was appointed to make this study, for it has opened my eyes to much which before was obscure, and I mean to exert myself for my own improvement and that of my kind, and I hope to have the coöperation of those who claim me as their property. It seems there is an understanding in this convention that a permanent organization will be effected, and I suggest, if this comes about, we have a committee appointed to collate and bring forward facts which may be found in the best writings of the best scientists regarding our race.

"The theme is inexhaustible, and I feel as if my few remarks and quotations had only touched lightly and not at all efficiently upon the subject. I should like to have mentioned our psychic relations to man, and the probabilities of our having a soul, but felt if I confined myself to facts upon the high state of our physical being and mental status, it would save us from the criticism of those who think that only those who have marriage ceremonies have souls. Mr. President, I am done.



During the recital of the paper there had been gradually increasing interest. As point after point was brought out, and the position in nature's economy to which our race was entitled announced, a feeling of dignity seemed to pervade the assembled company.

The President and Columbus seemed to say: "I told you so."

Dolly Varden was elegant and reserved, as if she had known these things all along.

"I wonder what we should all be," said she, "if we could study and learn as human beings do?"

Then there commenced a regular expression of opinions as to the line of life preferred by each.

I remember that Dolly Varden wanted to be a painter, Columbus thought he would like to be an author, Starlight would like to be a minister, Bonnie said he wouldn't be a milliner or a photographer because he knew some who did not like cats. Katrina Rogers said he would be an orator; he had studied it for ten years, anyway.

"I think," said Josephine, "that I should like to be a trained nurse."

"Oh, no," said Johnnie Bear, "don't say that, for I want to like you, and I couldn't if you were a trained nurse."

We all looked in astonishment at his denunciation of the trade.

"Well," said he, "some trained nurses are all right. If a woman is hateful she is hateful, no matter what she is doing, but they have a chance to be hatefuller in that profession than any other. Yes, I'm bitter. I had a little namesake, a little black darling who was so loving that he always put his paws on any one's face and licked it whenever he had a chance, and a cantankerous old trained nurse chloroformed him. She didn't like cats or anything else. Then some more trained nurses in a big city threw a nice cat from a sixth story window of a well-known hospital. No, I don't like trained nurses, they have too good an opinion of themselves. Oh, there are good women in the trade, and they would be good in whatever business they were."

"Well," said Josephine, "I would not do any business where I could not be a good cat."

The remarks seemed to be in danger of spinning out until we forgot to give credit to Leslie for our awakening, and I thought it was time to remember him.

"Mr. President," said I, "I move a vote of thanks to Leslie, of Browning Square, for the very able paper with which he has favored us this morning."

"It is with unmitigated pleasure," said Muggins, "that I second the motion."

Of course, when the motion was put everybody voted in the affirmative.

'The motion is carried unanimously," said the President. "I want to add the assurance of my own personal pleasure that Leslie accepted so willingly the mission, and so thoroughly and beautifully presented the subject to us. You may be interested in knowing the principal fact received in a letter from my birthplace by my people this morning, as it bears directly upon the treatment of cats and what their possibilities of long life are, under wise treatment."

We hastened to assure our President of our interest.

"Well," he said, "the letter contained the announcement that Beauty Belden had just died at the age of twenty-five years, near the Thames River in Connecticut. Beauty was born right on the banks of that beautiful river. I knew him when we lived there. He used to go in the river fishing, and was a smart and handsome cat in every way. His people were farmers, and gave him the tenderest care and most wholesome food. He never had to stay out of doors when it was cold, and never did anything that he did not want to. Beauty's last years were made a dream of comfort. This helps to prove, my friends, that we cats seldom live out half our lives. We are dependent upon human beings for everything, and cannot help ourselves

when we are not properly cared for. Thanking you for your attention to me, I now introduce Marcus, of Pine Grove."

We recognized in the tall, pale gray, scholarly looking cat, that came forward one who had occasionally been heard in general conversation, and always in a manner to give us an exalted opinion of him.

"Why should we not have a soul," said he, "when even a grain of sand is not lost?"

"You think your 'think' is of more consequence than the dust that the housemaid jerks off from the back of a chair, don't you?" interrupted Columbus, with complacent composure.

"I don't believe," said Marcus, "that the feelings, the sentiments, that actuate us, the affection we bear our good masters and mistresses, our own inherent ideas of right and wrong, are all going to perish, when science says that not one atom of even the commonest material becomes extinct. Human beings see and understand things that we do not, and it is reasonable to suppose that even human beings have not reached the highest stage of development. They look backward to a lower stage of existence, and how can they be conceited enough to think that all progress has stopped with them? It is said that God made man in his image, but we have not learned that man, as we behold him, was thus made. How does a man know when he mistreats one of us but that he mis-

treats the soul that will animate a remote descendant of himself? There are more things in heaven and earth than man's small philosophy has dreamed of! Mark my words, human beings will be called to account sometime for all of their ill-treatment of us. However, any time I would rather suffer than be the cause of suffering. I would rather, too, take my punishment here than in eternity."

"You like to get through with a bad job," said Columbus flippantly.

"Yes," said Marcus. "If any punishment is to fall upon me, the sooner it is over the better."

"I guess the man that tore Polly Wog's eye out would feel rather uncomfortable if he and Polly Wog should meet in the better world," said Pinkie softly.

Polly Wog looked at Pinkie as if he were touched with the thought that perhaps sympathy might not, after all, be such an uncomfortable thing to accept from another. He certainly refrained this time from any of the contemptuous expressions with which he was apt to favor the pitying speeches of the convention members.

"I guess the boy that tried to drown little Scat will feel sick when they meet in heaven," said Eulalie.

"Yes, *when* that boy and man go there," said F. O. Fowl, "just tell me and I'll stay out. Fffs-s-s-s-t! Fffs-s-s-s-t!"

I think that Polly Wog then and there made up his mind not to snarl any more at F. O. Fowl, for his sentiments were largely in line with his own, and his sympathy so warm and impulsive as to be genuine.

"I hope it will be clean in heaven," said Dolly Varden, looking down at her snow-white feet, and licking a spot where a fly touched her.

"So do I," said Topaz, who was apt to carry along pieces of paper and straw, which caught upon his long, soft, yellow fur.

"According to Æsop," said Marcus, "cats have had a great many experiences, some of which he has included in his fables.

"He says, too:

"'The Cat from man his grave demeanor took,
The measured stalk, fixed eye and solemn look.'"

"More likely man copied from us," said Columbus. "I think it is not necessary for us to imitate any one. If I am not very much mistaken, we are sufficient unto ourselves. I give Æsop credit for knowing enough to write 'cat' with a capital 'C.' People were more intelligent two and three thousand years ago than now. We have, unfortunately, permitted them

to retrograde. I move we adjourn," Columbus added suddenly. "I am hungry and I would rather the meeting stopped than to go away and leave the rest of you here."

Without thought the motion was carried, although we had not expressed ourselves as fully upon the paper as we had intended, but Columbus had a carrying way that was hard to resist.

END OF FIFTH DAY.

SIXTH DAY.

All members of the convention were in their places when the nine o'clock bells ceased ringing. It seemed to me that every face we had seen and many strange ones made up the assemblage upon which we looked.

The understanding had spread abroad that this was to be the eventful morning when our life histories, experiences, and sentiments were to be crystallized in abiding resolutions. A buzz of expectancy pervaded the room.

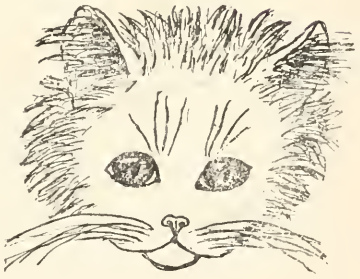
As usual, there were little incidents preceding the business of the day.

We were very much pleased when we entered to see two photographs on the rostrum, and the immediate question was: "Whose are they?"

We were made to guess a while, and as we were not successful, Goldie, who had been a silent and interested listener during the meetings, but had said little, smiled as he came for-

ward and acknowledged the photographs were of him.

"I thought I would give you an ocular demonstration," he said, "of how it hurts us to be left alone. My people were home when the first picture was taken, and I was happy, but after they had been gone a week, and I thought that I was deserted, the second picture was taken by a neighboring photographer. I don't look happy, do I? I was not happy. I was perfectly miserable, I can tell you. The neighbors brought me food, but as others have said here, there was no appetite. Yes, as you may imgaine by my looks now, my people are home, but I don't believe that I would have lived very long with them away. I wish our people could realize how we suffer in their absence. I knew a lovely gray mamma kittie who belonged to a minister's family. Every summer her owners went away, and at last she cried so hard for them that she could not get well when they came back, and pined away and died."



"Well," said Muggins, "we are delighted that you are looking so well now, and we hope that your people will read our report and resolutions when they come out. Then, perhaps, they will not leave you alone again."

"Why in the world don't people have boarding houses for cats to which they may go when left alone?" said Columbus. "They are talking of having such a place in our town, but they never will get at it. Of course, it would not be like home, but for some cats it would be better than home."

"I should not like to go to a boarding house unless it was very clean," said Dolly Varden.

"Oh, no," said little Scat, continuing to duplicate the sentiments of our prominent members.

Beautiful Cozy next attracted attention.

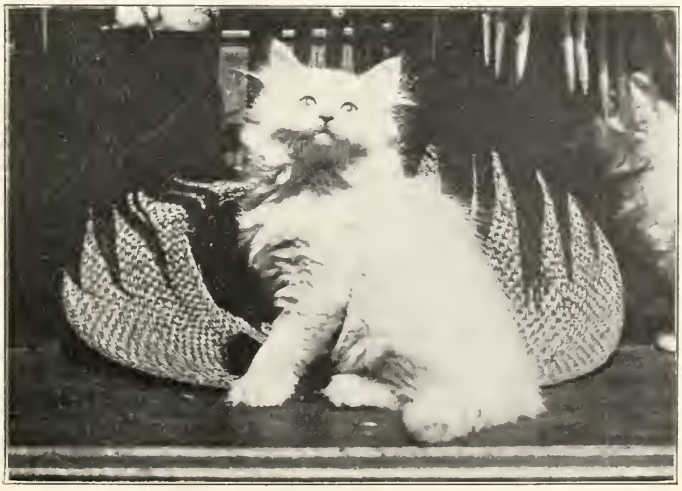
"My friends," said she, "you know I thought that my kittens did not have eyes, but they have, and beautiful bright eyes, too, and here is a picture of myself and my family. My mistress is right up with the times, you may be sure, and she had our photographs taken."

No one could help but admire the lovely representations of the dainty snow-white family, and we gave the pictures much thought and attention.

After a while the importance of this special meeting appeared to impress itself upon our cats. A constant change of position evinced a desire upon the part of our numerous members to secure agreeable companionship during the reading and important discussion which might follow.

Polly Wog sat by himself, bedraggled, indifferent, and quiet. Columbus insisted upon sit-

COZY AND HER BABIES. "LET'S WATCH."



SWEETHEART. "I'D LIKE TO SING LIKE THAT BIRD"

ting near the President, and upon the opposite side from my position.

Eulalie sat at the left of Polly Wog, and F. O. Fowl at his right. Between F. O. Fowl and Pinkie was little Scat. This was all as it should be, F. O. Fowl, the fighting protector of the unfortunate, and the mamma kittie, the consoler.

The members of the committee of resolutions were at my right—Dolly Varden sitting next to me, then came Turvey and last Bonnie.

Muggins was near the front, maintaining an air of aristocratic repose, but ever on the alert to secure a clear understanding. Taciturn was at Muggins' right, Josephine was near Pinkie, and other cats gradually became placed as pleased them best.

It seemed to me that there was every shade of pussie present except green.

The Maltese cats ranged in color from purple to silver gray; the yellow pets from pale salmon pink, through clear yellow, to orange red. Our gray friends were tinted all the way from dark cold gray to brown. There were pure white cats of ordinary blood, while Starlight gleamed like freshly fallen snow. We had black cats by the half dozen; we called them "witch cats." There were white pussies with black spots, and black pussies with white spots, while many were mingled white and other colors. The tortoise shell cats were few in num-

ber, and none approached Dolly Varden in beauty.

Sweet little Topaz, Amber, an invalid; Cozy and a few others, were full-blooded Angora cats, but were so soft and dainty with such baby expressions that no one was the least particle jealous of them.

Prince and Confidence had been of so much assistance to the committee that they deserve especial mention. Confidence is a tiger cat, with white face, breast and feet, and very thoughtful and attends strictly to business. He is very large and quite fleshy, and seems remarkably healthy and strong, for his home is a butcher shop. Although he has not established enough communication between himself and his owners for them to learn the quality of his intellect, he is very observant, and from the customers who throng the shop has acquired a fund of useful information, and a power of reasoning to conclusions that has enabled him to give good advice upon several important matters.

Prince is black and white, large, and has had a life untrammeled and free. His people live in the suburbs in a large house, surrounded by extensive grounds. His mistress is a poet, and he points with pride to some of her work. Nothing has confined his powers. His has been a spontaneous, free, happy growth, but he has not been unobservant of the conditions of his

race, and he brought a clean and unbiased judgment to bear when his advice was solicited.

After the proceedings of the last meeting were recited and accepted, an unwonted hush pervaded the room. After looking quietly around as if to assure himself that all were present and ready, our President said:

"Friends you are aware of the important character of the business arranged for this afternoon. Mr. Chairman of the committee upon Resolutions, are you ready with your report?"

When Bonnie commenced in a quiet, dignified and forceful manner and tone to speak the words which to us might mean weal or woe, we felt that the Advisory Board had chosen wisely, and that we should be represented in a manner to command the respect and attention of human kind, even if we were not fortunate enough to revolutionize its sentiment regarding us.

"Mr. President," said Bonnie, "we have chosen to precede each resolution with the cause of the resolution. Cause and effect then are not so widely separated as to bewilder the minds of our members, and do not leave obscure to the reading public the reason for the appeal we hereby make."

"If any one has any objections to this man-

ner of forming the preambles and resolutions will he now express them?" said our President.

Perfect silence reigned; even Columbus was so intent upon watching to see if any one offered an objection that he forgot to make any remarks.

"You see," said the President smilingly, "that we have perfect confidence in our committee, and are ready to listen.

Then Bonnie recited as follows:

"Whereas, We suffer from all sorts of slander, are denominated witches, are said to be possessed of demons, are called treacherous, sly, and are accused of sucking the breath of infants and killing them, therefore,

"Resolved, We implore man to investigate thoroughly the subject, and learn if one hundred times as many babies have not been smothered through the carelessness and ignorance of mothers as through the affectionate but ignorant instincts of cats.

"Whereas, Children are allowed to handle us as if we were made of wood, pinch us as if we had no feeling, and inflict upon us all sorts of tortures, therefore,

"Resolved, We beg man to try to realize what his sufferings would be if a monster five or six times as large and as heavy as he were to pinch him, lie down upon him, stick pins into him, and pound his head until he was crazy.

We beg man to make a study of our highly organized nervous system, that he may learn that whatever tortures him tortures us, and that he suffers no agony that we do not, except that of certain mental conditions.

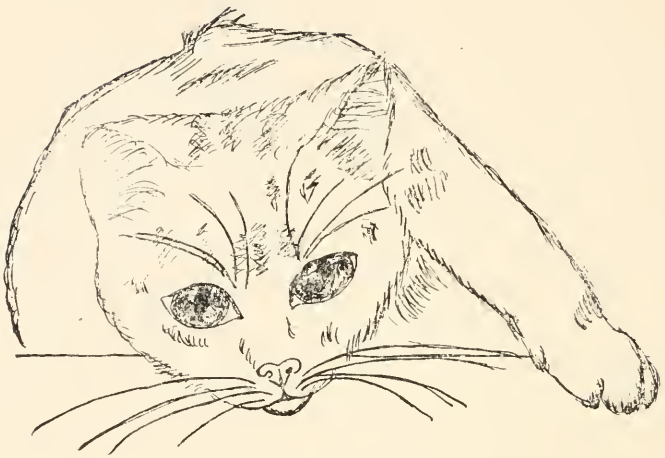
"Whereas, All have seen the trusting animal awaiting, or rather hoping for, the grateful caress—for we love caresses—and have seen the hopeful look changed to one of agony, fear and mortal hurt, as the heavy blow from hand, foot or stick came crashing down, be it therefore,

"Resolved, We implore man to meditate upon his agony when he has suffered even in purse or sentiment, to say nothing of blows, from a trusted friend.

"Whereas, Cats are given to children to play with, regardless of the torture the children inflict, and if to protect its life, or involuntarily to ease its sufferings or get away, it happens to scratch its tormentor, it is called all sorts of names, beaten until pain is past telling, and thrust out to the mercy of alley dogs and boys to die; therefore,

"Resolved, We beg that when kittens are given to children to play with, children be taught not to give them pain, and that they who are guilty of giving pain be punished.

"Whereas, If the order of things were reversed and a great cat used a baby as a plaything, jumping upon it, biting it, striking it,



and torturing it continually there would be immediate annihilation of that cat, and reason for it, but no more reason for complaint than cats now have upon their side—it having been a one-sided business too long, therefore,

"Resolved, We implore man to study the injustice of the matter of our treatment, and think of us from the standpoint of a Christian and a humanitarian.

"Whereas, Nothing is lost upon earth, and if so small a thing as the point of a gas flame enter into the great conservatory of nature, why not the more important essence of soul as connected with animals? therefore,

"Resolved, We ask man still further to investigate and learn if mayhap his stunting of our bodies and intellects, and the consequent belittling of our souls, is not at variance with the

universal plan of progress plainly designed by the Maker of men and animals.

"Whereas, Even those people who deny in us the existence of a soul acknowledge—most of them—their own possession of one, and must know they are surrounded with many temptations upon earth, and impair their own chances of future happiness by yielding thereto, therefore,

"Resolved, We ask man to beware, lest by his abuse of animals within his power, he forfeit his own right to the kingdom of heaven.

"Whereas, All other animals are allowed their ailments and are nursed out of them, cats seem to be allowed no right to be ill, and when suffering from ailments that in a dog would secure for it sympathy, medicine and care are treated as if they were criminals and thrust out to cold and torment, therefore,

"Resolved, That we beg human beings to endeavor to realize that cats are no more to blame for their sickness than are dogs, not as much to blame as grown human beings, suffer just as keenly from pain and weakness, are tortured mentally as well as physically, appreciate good care, understand the meaning of averted, unkind and threatening looks, are shocked to the verge of insanity by sudden hostile demonstrations, and are susceptible to gentle curative methods and means, and are grateful for the same.

"Whereas, It seems to be generally understood by human beings that so-called 'fits' in cats rightfully bring down upon us the collective explosive power of the household, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask man to understand that 'fits' are an involuntary exhibition of nervousness, just as in human beings; that it is no more disgusting than nervous prostration, which is supposed to be the prerogative of man; that not having the full reasoning power of man, we are frightened at our dreadful sensations, and that throwing water upon us and hurling us out of doors only makes us worse, and that gentle treatment, such as rubbing, smoothing, petting, and regular massage will banish immediately the nervous sensations and speedily effect a cure."

"Everybody in the land ought to hear that," said Tottie.

It was the first time Tottie had spoken, and we looked at her in surprise. She was a pretty gray kitten with remarkably large, bright eyes, and lately had felt a little aggrieved because of a new pet in the shape of a little daughter of the house, who had come to divide the caresses of the household. Tottie, in her young days, inadvertently attained distinction by falling from a fourth-story window upon a paved courtway, and coming through the ordeal without other indication of the mishap than a dis-

trust of window sills as a safe place for a siesta.

"We are glad to hear an expression of opinion from our members," said Bonnie.

"I think we are all indorsing the resolutions, as you read," said Johnnie Bear.

"They could not be improved upon," said Pinkie, looking directly at Dolly Varden, as if she wished it distinctly understood that she realized the benefit of her sex in the consultations.

Dolly Varden bowed politely and said: "Thank you."

Then Bonnie continued:

"Whereas, Long years ago our ancestors were taken from the beauty and warmth of their ancestral home in opposition to their wishes, forced to live in a climate for which they were not intended by nature, and the constitutions of the members of our race have never been reconstructed to accommodate the change, therefore the rigors of a northern winter are as severe for us as for our ancestors, and it is not unusual to see cats with fozen ears and tails and see them wither away and die from exposure, and this is proof that we have been subjected to surroundings for which we were not made, that we are not responsible for these surroundings, that we thrive and give better service when prosperous and well, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man to provide comfortable shelter for us from the rigors of the winter, from rain and snow, and from many discomforts with which we are assailed and which make us miserable and shorten our lives.

"Whereas, The Providence that made us inhabitants of congenial climates also made us carnivorous, and by that token it means that we are meat eaters, but many of our owners literally starve us by denying us proper food, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man either to experiment with different members of our race and learn the nutriment best suited to us, or gather statistics as to how cats have been most successfully reared to secure health, beauty, usefulness and long life.

"Whereas, The blundering part of humanity claims we are better mousers when half starved, but we know that if we are half starved we have neither time, patience nor strength to hunt for mice, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore mankind to make a test upon this subject or gather statistics and be satisfied that the best-fed cats are the best hunters and that nothing destroys the taste for game with our carnivorous race.

"Whereas, In our kittenhood we sometimes suffer greatly while our first teeth are falling out, and our second set growing in, and at such

times our teeth are often twisted in our mouths, our jaws sore and swollen, and we lose our appetites, and it is almost impossible for us to chew, and we necessarily go without food, become emaciated, and sometimes dizzy, in which case it is said we are in convulsions

and no care is taken of us, and at such times we die, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask our owners to pay us a little attention at such times in the way of giving us finely chopped meat and perhaps pulling a tooth that is twisted in such a manner that it tortures our lips and tongue.

"Whereas, Many rude jokes and much unseemly anger is expended upon our so-called 'howling,' or 'fighting,' when the truth is, we are not fighting half of the time when we are accused of it, but are conversing in our own language; sometimes talking about other cats, sometimes rehearsing scenes of torture through which we have passed, and,

"Whereas, A noted man of science lately affirmed that even flies have a language, we assert that *we* have a language, and if human beings do not understand it we are not to blame, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask mankind to study a little more into the mysteries of nature before he exposes his ignorance by hurling boots and brickbats at innocent animals.

"Whereas, Every living thing, plant or animal, requires water, and, as our hearts beat at a rate that sends our blood coursing through our veins at a fast, consuming pace, water is almost more of a necessity to us than to any animal of our size not amphibious, and, whereas, cats often beg piteously for drink and yet it is rarely the cry is answered, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man to remember the suffering that deprivation of water causes him and not to forget to provide means both in the house and outside for satisfying our thirst.

"Whereas, All animals require a certain

quantity of salt, and although we require it seldom, yet the demand and need at the time are great, and should be satisfied, therefore,

"Resolved, That we beg man to provide occasionally a little salt meat for us, only a little, it is all we require.

"Whereas, It has been proved that cats easily attain the age of twenty or thirty years with proper care, and if our lives are shorter, it is because we are robbed of our natural rights, and man who assumes to be our protector becomes our murderer, for all life taken unnecessarily is murder, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man to make more of a study of our condition, and learn not only something of the needs of our physical being, but also of our mental capacity, and find out if we may not be of more use in the economy of nature than he has yet discovered.

"Whereas, Cats are affectionate and domestic, and when they are kindly treated become closely attached to their owners, but a superstition indulged in more largely by the ignorant than the better class, exists against moving cats; it is said to bring bad luck, and the petted puss is left in an empty house to starve, mourn, freeze or submit to the mercies of hostile strangers, and,

"Whereas, Cats have been known to die of grief from this cause, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man to investi-

gate this matter, and see if more misfortune does not come to the one who commits such cruelty than to the one who exercises the impulses of a tender heart.

"Whereas, We are ruthlessly given from one person to another, even though we have been domiciled for years with one family, and we so love the voice and touch of our real friends that separation is next to death, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask mankind to meditate upon this matter, and see if our griefs in this line may not be lessened.

"Whereas, In case of a supposed superfluity of cats we are carried off or 'dropped' by the way, to be picked up or killed, mercifully or otherwise, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask man to remember that the former method is more apt than otherwise to bring untold suffering, and the latter method is taking a risk with his own soul, which, perhaps, he would better not attempt.

"Whereas, A half-starved, beaten, bruised, frozen little mother cat can never give you large, beautiful kittens, therefore,

"Resolved, That mother cats be well fed at all times, and kept comfortable and happy.

"Whereas, Cats generally have too much sense to overeat, and may be trusted to use good judgment upon that subject, therefore,

"Resolved, That we, in the majority of cases,

be allowed to eat all we wish of wholesome food, as a preventive of disease and a help to strength, activity and beauty.

"Whereas, Dogs originate a very loathsome disease called 'mange,' and, as it leaves no visible trace where the dogs pass or have lain, we are apt to be brought in contact with it. It first attacks the top of our heads, and then, as we endeavor to remove it from that place, our feet become affected. Our hair comes off in patches, we are scaly and repulsive. We suffer dreadfully from the horrible, burning pain, itching, and prostration, and because of our looks and disease people very naturally avoid us, and often cruelly abuse us. We become a burden to ourselves, and unless we are cured we die a lingering, dreadful, offensive death from a cause for which we are entirely innocent. Also we are turned out in the cold at such times to die, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask human beings to relieve us of our sufferings by some of the many means within their power, for any cat fancier will gladly give advice as to the best curatives for the disease, which, if taken in time, may be cured with a little patience. The same may be said of eczema, for which it is often mistaken.

"Whereas, Prominent cat fanciers assert that, in the absence of other directions, a cat should be treated in the same way as a small

baby, because of the delicacy of its construction, therefore,

"Resolved, That we urge upon mankind that thought, and that they banish some of the strong medicines with which well-meaning people have sought to cure our ills.

"Whereas, We are accused of carrying disease from one house to another, and we assert that if we were not exposed to the disease we could not carry it, and that parents sometimes, to please their children, give those children who are suffering from contagious diseases the kittens they wish to play with, and that children in other houses take us to play with, and that we are helpless in the matter, therefore,

"Resolved, That we beg our owners both for their own good and ours, and for that of the citizens in general, they keep us away from children who have contagious diseases, remembering that we cannot help ourselves.

"Whereas, In view of the vast superiority in body and brain of those of our race who have received kind and appreciative care over those who have not received such, it proves the beneficial effects of intelligent treatment, therefore,

"Resolved, We implore man to make a note of this fact and let it tell whether or not we are being used as we deserve, and whether the trust we are to mankind is worthily bestowed.

"Whereas, In addition to the above preamble, we may also state that cats for one reason or another are left out in the cold of winter, and that there are some people who are kind enough to keep in their yards warm boxes in which are straw and other articles, to make stray cats and stray dogs comfortable, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask man to remember the blessing of this kind provision and not be backward about imitating it.

"Whereas, In view of many facts developed in our convention, and stated in our preambles, it is true that cats in general and upon an average do not live one-tenth of their days because of unintelligent and bad-hearted treatment, therefore,

"Resolved, That we implore man to correct this crying evil both for the good of his own soul and for our well-being, by according us the treatment for which nature has made us."

"True! True! Every word of it!" cried Columbus, his animation "enthusing" the rest of the members and eliciting words of cheerful indorsement.

"Oh, if people will only see things in that light!" exclaimed Josephine.

"I don't see how they can help it," volunteered Pinkie.

"Huh! they won't try very hard to see," growled Polly Wog.

"Oh, my, no!" whined little Scat, who had taken several naps while the reading was going on.

Then Katrina Rogers attracted attention as he thought of something, and pleased us with a quotation:

"Forward, brave champions to the fight!
Sound trumpets!
God defend the right!
Then Teviot how thine echoes rang,
When bugle sound and trumpet clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid-list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close!'

"There is no harm in invoking the muse of Sir Walter Scott to stimulate us," he said.

We agreed with him, and hoped he would quote some more, but, as he did not, the resolutions were continued.

"Whereas, We are taken as kittens, one by one, from our kith and kin, are taught to confine our interests to our own households, to look upon outside animals as intruders, are dependent upon our owners for all that we have —when, if left in our native country and native conditions, we would be independent— have become part and parcel of this later civilization, of the homes in which we live, in some of which we are a necessity, and in some of which we are a luxury, we are not our own masters, and, as we have said, we are held in

trust, and in many cases the trust is abused, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask mankind if it may not be true that if a sparrow may not fall to the ground without the knowledge of Divinity, how much more will our sufferings and our unprovoked abuse be known.

"Whereas, Cats are not naturally antagonistic to dogs, and would usually allow them to pass in peace if not first attacked, and,

"Whereas, Dogs are beasts of prey generally, and the majority of them are inclined to savagery, therefore,

"Resolved, That any human being found teaching, or encouraging, or even allowing, dogs to torture, mutilate, or kill cats, be severely punished.

"Whereas, There are many homes where members of our race continually suffer abuse, are dragged around, beaten, frozen, starved; and as one who is cognizant of a wrong and does nothing to prevent that wrong is also responsible for that wrong, therefore,

"Resolved, That people who are aware of the tendency of a family habitually to mistreat animals induce that family to mend its ways or prevent it from having animals in its possession.

"Whereas, We are sociable beings and enjoy the society of our owners if they are at all kind, enjoy caresses, kind looks, and words, and un-

derstand them far better than our owners realize, therefore,

"Resolved, That we ask that such welcome attentions be not withheld from us, for it is well said that 'animals and people suffer according to their capacity for suffering.'

"Whereas, We are essentially the domestic animal of civilization, no rude tribes assimilate with us, and we are not at home with them; the ancient Egyptians in their advanced civilization worshiped us and built temples for us; when one of our race died, the city in which he died mourned for a stated time, and,

"Whereas, It is a well-known fact that the more cultivated the people as a whole, or as individuals, the more tender consideration our race receives, therefore,

"Resolved, That ill treatment of us is an indication of savage, brutal natures, and good and gentle care an indication of refinement and cultivation, both in the nation and in the individual.

"Whereas, We believe that in the great summing up, our wrongs will all be righted, and that our communication between us and our Maker is never interrupted, yet we believe our suffering here is needless, and, therefore,

"Resolved, That we promulgate these resolutions, hoping that they will appeal to the Divinity in the heart of man and result in our release from neglect and persecution, and secure greater development and happiness for ourselves, and, as a result, more good and more happiness for mankind.

"Respectfully submitted by your Committee upon Resolutions, with thanks for being allowed the honor of serving you.

Signed, "BONNIE, TURVEY, DOLLY VARDEN."

Profound silence reigned upon the conclusion of the reading of the resolutions.

The members of the convention looked interested, wide awake, thoughtful, observant.

Even Columbus appeared meditative, and seemed to commence to realize that there were cats in the world that had to submit to the fate of unmerited abuse and destruction.

It was fully five minutes before Starlight arose, and, speaking most gently, said:

"You have heard the resolutions, what will you do with them?"

"I move that they be adopted as read, in the order in which they were read, every last one of them all together," said Columbus with emphasis, showing that his eyes were opening.

"I second the motion," said F. O. Fowl.

"I motion, too," piped little Scat.

Pinkie looked around at Scat indulgently,

and a little smile broke over the faces of the members, relieving the general intensity of feeling.

"Ditto here," said Smiley.

"I ditto, too," added the little voice, and then everybody laughed outright.

"Gently, my friends, gently," said the President. "We have escaped interruption so far in this memorable convention, and we desire nothing to mar its close."

"Question," said Taciturn.

"Question," added Agamemnon.

"Question," called Blitz.

"Question," said Orlando, Docile, Cozy, White Sultan, Katrina Rogers, Tottie, Smiley, Buster, Johnny Bear, Tige, Tom, Dottie, Do-ci-do, Stand-Pat, Pinkie, Eulalie, Josephine, Prit, and dozens more.

Of course, Scat said in her slim little voice. "I question, too," then the President smiled, and said:

"You have all heard the motion, and it is not necessary for me to repeat it. All in favor of the motion, please hold up your right paws."

Well, if I *am* a cat, I must say that it was a pretty sight. Every cat except Polly Wog voted in the affirmative, and he remained huddled over his feet, as usual. Cats are acknowledged to be the most graceful creatures in the world, and they all held up their paws, palms

outward, as they had seen human beings hold their hands in their several lodges and women's clubs.

I think Columbus took delight in exhibiting his plump, well-cared-for proportions.

"All opposed," said our President.

The only one left to vote in the negative was Polly Wog, but he kept perfectly quiet, as if it were all one to him whichever way it went. None of us criticised him, we just said to ourselves: "Poor Polly Wog."

"You see," said Starlight, turning to the committee, "that your work has been done in such a thorough, exhaustive, and sympathetic manner as to receive the approval of the convention. Allow me to add that I think our initial Advisory Board showed a keen perception of

personal qualifications when it selected the Committee upon Resolutions. And the Committee upon Resolutions has in every way proved that it was entitled to the trust reposed in it."

"I move," said Flute, "that the thanks of this convention be extended to the Committee upon Resolutions for the very able manner in which it has presented to the world our griefs, and its wise suggestions regarding relief therefrom."

"I move to amend," said our little black and white Buster, "by adding, 'and to the Advisory Board for its wise selection of said committee.' "

"I move to amend the amendment," added Teddy, "by adding, 'and to our worthy President for his good judgment in selecting so sensible an Advisory Board.' "

By this time we were hilarious, and ready to thank everybody and everything that had anything to do in bringing about these resolutions, to say nothing of the members mentioned in the motion and amendments, and everything went through with a buzz, and was adopted unanimously.

"I should think that would make people take a different view of our race," said Columbus soberly.

"I should think that would make human beings feel for the woes of animals so long de-

pendent upon them for happiness and life," said Eulalie.

"Yes," croaked Polly Wog, "make them feel for a club to knock our brains out with."

"Let them try it on you when I am around," said F. O. Fowl, looking as belligerent as if he momentarily expected the club to make its appearance.

Polly Wog looked at F. O. Fowl, moved his fore paws uneasily, then curled one under his chest in a half-restful position, as if, without realizing it, he felt a little of the repose that results from a sense of being protected.

F. O. Fowl's explosiveness had come to be looked upon by us as rude, perhaps, but chivalrous care for the weak and suffering, and we accepted it with no displeasure, for we knew that as long as we were kind and gentle to others we should not suffer from his high temper. His unceasing championship of Polly Wog was very agreeable to us. He seemed determined to win the heart of our sufferer, and to long to punish his persecutors.

"I am sure," said our President, "that we all feel grateful to the framers of these resolutions, and to each one of the members of this convention for his or her attendance. We have been brought face to face with much suffering, but most of the suffering of our race we have not seen. The kittens that have been frozen, starved, and tortured to death cannot

meet with us. The horrors of their lives and deaths we can guess from what we have heard here, and we know the unwritten histories are sadder yet. I don't want to shock you, but I must tell you an incident that I heard my master tell that shows what brutality is in the make-up of some human, or rather inhuman, beings. He said that one day at the depot of an Iowa town, some one spied a little family of

young kittens that the mother had placed in a keg, having no other home for them. People were standing around admiring and talking about them, they were so pretty, when the fireman of an Illinois Central train joined the crowd around the keg. Suddenly grasping the keg, he said:

" 'I know what to do with them,' and shoved the whole thing into the furnace of his engine!"

There were cries of horror from all over the room, and some of the mamma kitties cried outright.

"Did they let that devil live?" asked F. O. Fowl.

"They wouldn't have let him live if all of the men there had been like my master," answered Starlight. "He wanted to lynch him. You may be sure that some bad will come to that fireman, if it has not already done so, for this was some years ago."

"Do you suppose such a man could ever go to heaven?" asked Pinkie.

"Heaven?????" Of course it was F. O. Fowl who exploded in wrath.

The inference was easily understood, and all grasped his meaning as to the most probable place for the future home of the wretch.

After order was restored Starlight continued his remarks.

"In passing to other matters from the subject of our resolutions," said he, "I wish to mention the thought of the permanent organization. The idea is not new to all of you, for I have held several consultations with members with whom I have been thrown in contact. The thought is that we have a permanent organization, meeting at stated intervals, say once a month, for the consideration of such subjects as may naturally come before us, and for the protection and comfort of our weak and suffering brothers and sisters."

Immediately there were expressions indicative of the glad acceptance of this proposition.

Here little Scat's weak voice was heard to say:

"I expect the happy cats could bring the hungry cats something to eat then, once a month."

"Once a month!" said Pinkie, "you dear little thing!"

Polly Wog's one eye turned thoughtfully toward Scat, as if he felt a glimmer of calculation regarding the possibility of his power to provide a little food for the waif.

"I wanted Scat to remain with me," said Muggins, "but she insists that I am robbing myself to give her food. Really, my proportions lack considerable of indicating any withholding of the proper amount of nutriment."

All of the cats had been interested in providing food for our hungry kittens, and our meetings were almost always interrupted by lunches served by late-coming members to our hungry ones, but when the meetings would be so far apart a cat could easily starve between times. There seemed to be many mental calculations as to how to reach our suffering brothers and sisters during the intervening weeks, and a resolution forming in each mind to take personal interest in the well-being of our unhappy friends.

"Some of us," said Starlight, "have found that our frequent absences from home are occasioning remark, and believe that before we are interrupted we would better bring this convention to a close, expecting to find but little difficulty in meeting but once a month. You

know we have missed several weeks since commencing, and that has made the time approach the coming of cold weather, when some of us are closely housed, and when we should find it difficult to come. In conclusion for to-day, for the time approaches noon, I want to say that I have, we all have, missed several faces that we were glad to see with us when we commenced. Since I am worried about these cats, I have asked some of our members to look them up and report at the next meeting, which may be our last of the convention proper."

After adjournment we gathered on the floor for a little social conversation and to renew our protestations of friendship.

I made Scat go home with me, that I might carry her a little food, which I had made up my mind that I would get for her, if I had to steal it. Polly Wog croaked:

"Good-by, little Scat."

I don't know when we had heard anything that pleased us so much, for it was the first time he had ever said a word at parting.

We all said:

"Good-by, Polly Wog. Be sure and be on time next week."

"I think we would miss you almost more than any one else," said Starlight gently.

The last we saw of Polly Wog and F. O. Fowl, the former was skulking along from one dark spot to another, while only a short dis-

tance behind him F. O. Fowl followed, determined to protect the poor unfortunate.

Starlight smiled a little grimly, remarking as we parted:

"I don't like disturbances, but really I believe it would please me to see one of poor Polly Wog's tormentors attempt any hostile demonstrations now."

END OF SIXTH DAY.

THE CATS' TEA PARTY

AN INTERRUPTED TEA PARTY

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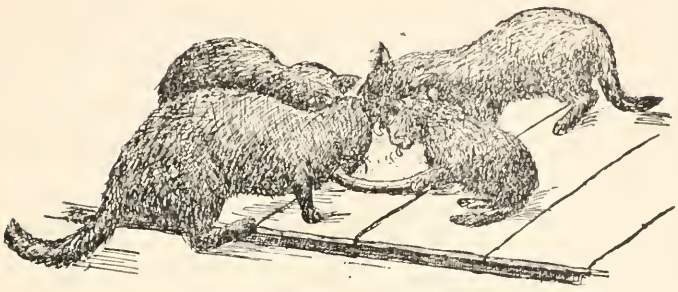


SEVENTH DAY.

We were not a joyful assemblage as we gathered for our last meeting, although we realized that the approaching cold weather would present insurmountable obstacles to frequent sessions, even should the convention continue.

All were present when the bells rang for nine except F. O. Fowl and Polly Wog, and we felt that we did not wish to commence without them.

About fifteen minutes past nine the President said:

"I delay in calling our meeting to order because of the absence of two of our prominent members. We have confidence that F. O. Fowl can take care of himself, and his being late may mean that he is settling some score with an abuser of innocence, but I am anxious when any of our homeless and suffering cats are not on time. I see many faces here that I hope may brighten with tender care. Perhaps while delaying the usual minutes we may hear the

reports regarding the absent cats for which your chairman appointed a committee of inquiry."

At the commencement of our convention there was in attendance a little gray kitten, which the casual observer would say was simply that which its name indicated, but it had an exceedingly beautiful face, and was such a quiet, pathetic little thing that we all grew to love it. It never said anything, but it looked with its big blue eyes at us in such a tender, plaintive, and wondering way, and it seemed so beseeching and velvety, we called it "Pansy."

If it were brushed against, or touched ever so lightly, it would lie over on its side with its paws put palm to palm, and close its eyes like a dying bird, and it really seemed to hold its breath; afterward reviving gradually and settling itself over its paws and feet, only to drop over again upon the first touch.

Belonging to the same family were two cream-colored kittens like fluffs of yellow down. I have always noticed that where there is one yellow kitten in a family, there are almost always two; in fact, I have never known an instance of one alone. Another peculiarity of cats of this color is that they are rarely females, grow to be very large, and are exceed-

ingly intelligent—our Columbus being a proof of all these statements—his brother dying in early kittenhood. We could not tell the two kittens apart except by their dispositions, and often imagined how fine they would be when grown, and deprecated the thought of their being separated. One, Aileen Aroon, was as gentle as Pansy, and had a trick when disturbed of lying upon its side and pressing the palms of its paws together something like Pansy, but holding them close under its pink mouth and chin, while its twin, Bonnie Dundee, would really snarl and throw out its nails in a threatening manner. Both kittens, however, seemed to think exactly alike otherwise, and follow each other as if indeed they were inseparable.

We had often wondered what had become of these three sweet kittens, and the President had appointed a committee to learn where they lived, and endeavor to persuade them to continue in attendance, for they were like dainty pictures and we wanted them with us. It was not until the present session that we were in the way of being enlighted upon their condition, and then, Sweetness, who learned, when too late, that she was a distant relative of theirs, made us sorrowful in answer to the President's request that she make her report.

"Before I found their home," said she, "all three of the kittens had sickened and died, and sickened in such a way that their owners could

not understand their disease, and yet did everything in their power to save them. One morning Pansy was found upon her side dead, with her little paws, palm to palm in a beseeching way before her eyes. Aileen Aroon died the following day, as gently and prettily as he had lived, resisting nothing, but folding his little paws under his pink mouth to take whatever should come. But Bonnie Dundee made a harder fight for life, lasting a day longer and snarling his impatience at his suffering and resisting death to the end. When I learned all regarding them, they had been dead two weeks and their bodies disposed of, so I knew there was no use trying to honor them by anything that we could do."

Their sweet faces, and especially that of Pansy, haunted us, and we wondered if they had not fulfilled for us some mission.

Anyway, I think we were more inclined to be tender with each other, and we all said that this emphasized the fact that our ailments were not understood as well as they ought to be, and if people generally valued us as we deserved, they would support specialists for our benefit, and not let us suffer and die needlessly. We also had it borne in upon us that because of our exquisitely sensitive nerves we often suffer intense degrees of torture not realized by casual observers, and not even by most of our owners, kind and gentle as some of them are.

"I must add another sad story to the ones already told," said our President. "Perhaps you remember that I gave you a short account of an affectionate waif that my mistress was endeavoring to cure. She could not succeed in her kind efforts. The little thing is dead. It had been locked in a public hall and was starving when my people found it. It was a little black kitten, not more than two months old, and my mistress did everything she could for it, but it is gone. Of course, I had no opportunity to attend to the disposal of its body, but it is past being hurt now, and I know that my people would care for it better than we would have the privilege of doing."

We all expressed our sympathy, and just here a pleasant episode relieved the tension upon our hearts, for Dolly Varden called our attention to Josephine.

"I think that Josephine has something that you would all like to see," said our belle.

Our President asked for it, and Josephine showed us two pictures of herself and of her two almost grown children. Immediately we called them "The Tea Party" and "The Interrupted Tea Party."

Josephine and her two kittens were eating supper and evidently had an interruption. Josephine's photograph was fine, and we thought her kittens very much like her, and had a long talk about the subject of having our pictures taken.

I presume that my picture never will be taken, because my people are not cultivated in that line, and probably the only glory that will ever be mine will be that of my connection with this cats' convention.

Immediately after the picture episode a newcomer was announced. At least it was said that we were to have a new addition by the name of "King Pet." We were all very anxious for King Pet's appearance, for we thought that bearing such a name he must be a very superior being, and the inmate and favorite of a luxurious home; so when the President announced "King Pet," of Locust Street, we all commenced to look around and assume pleasing attitudes. Eulalie, having a Grecian profile, turned her face away, and pretended to be talking with Taciturn. Josephine straightened up in a most dignified manner, while Pinkie posed with her nose pointed to the rafters and held it so until she detected slight little quivers of laughter from the contiguous brothers, when she, too, ceased posing, and sniffed the air in an audible manner when she beheld the cause of so much curiosity.

King Pet was the most ordinary cat of us all. He was small, black, and really had no points upon which I can enlarge, especially with my limited knowledge of his acquirements, and I have only mentioned him here to show how little may be in a name, and also the pardonable desire to make a good impression that actuates even the members of the little world to which we cats belong.

King Pet had no remarks to make.

"I would suggest," said our President, "that we commence with our banquet which we planned for this, perhaps, last meeting of the regular convention. Human beings often celebrate the close of a series of meetings with a banquet, so we have not ignoble precedent for our proceedings, only I wish Polly Wog and F. O. Fowl were with us. I ask Columbus, Confidence, Eulalie, Pinkie, and Turvey to bring in the refreshments. The sooner we have them the less liable to interruptions we shall be."

We who were always plentifully supplied had quietly prepared this entertainment, without the knowledge of our less fortunate friends. The committee mentioned hastened to an ob-

scure corner of the barn, and soon had a bountiful supply before us.

"I see our committee has made ample provision," said Starlight. "I am a little afraid that we have an oversupply. It will not do to leave any, for we do not want a hint of our presence to remain, lest we be excluded from the premises, which, so far, have proved quiet and agreeable, thanks to the originators of this meeting of the cats."

This our President said to encourage our hungry cats to eat to repletion.

"I'll put this away for F. O. Fowl and Polly Wog," said Columbus, selecting some of the best pieces of meat and placing them again in the larder.

As he was returning the last time he met little Scat with all that she could possibly carry going to the place where he had hidden the food, and she dropped her burden a second to quaver:

"I'll put this away for F. O. Fowl and Polly Wog."

Then she picked up the piece and added it to the collection that Columbus had made. Columbus stood and watched her, and his big golden eyes seemed to lighten with condescending, but wondering amusement and admiration.

This incident relieved our spirits a little, and we fell to, happy cats with the others, as if

we were exceedingly hungry and for once were going to have a comfortable repast. Of course, we well-fed cats pretended to this hunger, in order to persuade others to eat. As before indicated, it was not the first time that we had provided food and pretended to be hungry in order to encourage others, but I have not reported all matters of this kind, as I have endeavored to keep my report within pleasing limits.

We were in no hurry with our banquet because we kept hoping for the coming of F. O. Fowl and Polly Wog.

Dolly Varden had the hardest time of all to pretend to eat, because nothing but the extremest hunger would tempt her to eat from that which was not absolutely clean.

At last, when no one could eat any more, and a few remnants were added to the store laid away for our absent ones, Starlight ascended the rostrum, called us to order, and said:

"We cannot delay any longer for our friends. Let us hope for the best regarding them. Will our Secretary give us the report of the last meeting?"

When I recited the minutes as requested, there was a little choking sensation in my throat, for I presumed that next Monday morning would be a lonesome one for me, still, the thought of the proposed permanent organ-

ization cheered me somewhat, and I went through with my records, and they were duly approved.

After this there was a slight pause, when we noticed by Sun Down's movements that he was ready with a story, conundrum or question of some kind for our amusement.

"We shall listen to you, Sun Down," said our President smilingly anticipating the joker's desire.

"I want to ask," said Sun Down, "why a cat invariably wants to go into a room or through a door when it finds there are objections to its doing so?"

"Now, Sun Down," said our President consciously, "please do not air that especial perversity of our race. I acknowledge it in myself."

"I don't know that it is perversity," asserted Columbus. "When I want to go into a room I generally go, or else my people are very sorry they have thwarted my desires. You see I have quite a voice, and when I really let it out, it is not only uncomfortable for them, but also for the neighbors."

"Yes, we do know," said Pinkie, dreadfully afraid that Columbus was intending to give us an exhibition of his powers, then and there, "and sometime we will all go to the woods together and just see how loudly you can h-h-how—call."

Pinkie just caught herself as she commenced to say "howl."

"I acknowledge the same curiosity that Sun Down mentions," volunteered Muggins.

"Well, I guess that I feel the same way," said Eulalie.

"I acknowledge, as men say, 'the soft impeachment,'" added Confidence.

"I peachment, too," piped Scat.

As usual, we all laughed indulgently at Scat. She was an innocent circus for us, and I presume we should have laughed at anything she said.

"I do not think," said Josephine, "that the peculiarity belongs to us. Did you ever see a man when a door was closed against him? I *have*."

Josephine said this with an air that spoke volumes.

"I have, too," called several pussies in tones that convinced us all that at such times men were not fair to see.

"Well, I never thought of that before, although I might add some proof to Josephine's assertion," said Starlight. "We may conclude

then," he continued, "that, according to Leslie's paper, our curiosity is but another proof of our near approach, biologically, to man."

This was acknowledged to be the reasonable conclusion.

Here Muggins arose, and gaining recognition, said:

"Mr. President, my interest deepens in the subject proposed at our last meeting, viz., that of having a permanent organization. I recognize the fact now that our resolutions are formed and prepared for publication, the necessity for frequent meetings is eliminated. Also that autumn is not very distant, and winter in the near future, when some of us will be more closely housed, and our facilities for attending meetings fewer; therefore, it seems the logical conclusion of the convention that a permanent organization should be its outcome. I, for one, subscribe my name for such an organization."

"I 'scribe, too," said our piping little mimic.

We were all expressing our cheerful indorsement of the plan, when——

There was a wild rush, and F. O. Fowl, in a convulsion of agonized rage, fell, raved, and exploded into the room. We thought he had gone mad, and started to hide from him, for he hissed and howled, but after a while seemed trying to talk; at least, we heard him say:

"Done it! Done it! Done it! They've done it! Yow, yow, yow, yoow! They've done it! The beasts! The beasts! I'll kill them! I'll kill them! I'll *kill* them! They've done it! They've killed him! They've killed him! The beasts! The beasts! Oh! come, come, come! Let's kill everybody! Oh, oh, oh! Our Polly Wog! Our Polly Wog! They've done it! They've done it! They've killed our Polly Wog!"

F. O. Fowl tore around the room so that we could not get near him until he lay panting and exhausted. Then Starlight went and crouched down by him, resting his head against that of the moaning cat, and never uttering a word. We all crept softly nearer and nearer. We hardly breathed. Pinkie gradually stooped and commenced licking F. O. Fowl's shoulder. We all crowded around and got just as near as possible. I don't know how long we remained that way.

Even Columbus commenced to lick the body of the prostrate, broken hearted animal. Indeed, we were all broken hearted. We knew that there was no hope that Polly Wog was living, for F. O. Fowl knew too much to be mistaken. There was not one glimmer of hope.

Human beings often say that mothers cling most closely to the unfortunate ones in the family. I presume that was the case in our

convention. We had all felt such an overpowering pity for Polly Wog in his wretched life, and hoped that sometime we might lead him to pleasanter paths, that it seemed even more dreadful to have him go than if he had known a little happiness.

Our President's composure was all gone; he could not say a word. I think we would have moved an adjournment, but we felt that there was something we ought to know.

"Where is Polly Wog?" piped Scat, at last, her little mouth close to F. O. Fowl's ear.

It was just what was needed to break the spell.

F. O. Fowl sobbed: "In the alley, dead. Boys threw him around. I saw them. I want to kill them."

"There, there," whispered Pinkie, "it was what our Polly Wog wanted."

"Well, *we* didn't want it; we wanted *him*. I would have taken care of him after a while. I was coaxing around him, and now, oh! now, it is too late!"

"What killed him?" asked Dolly Varden, both because we wanted to know and because it was best to keep F. O. Fowl talking.

"A snapping, snarling cur with a boy tied to him," answered F. O. Fowl.

"Tell us about it," said Topaz.

"Oh! it's just the story over again that he told us about his mother. Just exactly, only

there was no little kitten for him to worry over. I waited until the boys went away after throwing Polly Wog at each other, and then I drew him into an obscure corner, and licked him to see if I could bring him to life; but he was gone! Our Polly Wog was gone!"

"We ought to bury him," said judicial and thoughtful Katrina.

"Yes, indeed," was the response in quiet and sympathetic tones from many of our members.

"Where can we bury him and when?" asked Muggins.

We all looked at Starlight, but he was lying inert, and could not speak. We realized more than ever how little prepared our President was for the hardships which fall to the lot of most of us, and we went on talking informally.

"We cannot bury him in the daylight," said I.

"No, no," moaned poor F. O. Fowl, "unless we want to see our Polly Wog suffer still more indignity. Oh! we'll have to be *'sly'* about it, just as human beings say we are. We'll have to go in the evening, or we shall be interrupted."

"Our people have a nice place for the purpose," said Prince; "it is some distance from here, to be sure, but we have such nice clean grounds, and shade trees, and plenty of room, and we can place him where he will not be disturbed."

"We had better do so to-night," suggested Bonnie, "for the sooner it is done the less opportunity there is for boys and dogs to indulge in their congenial occupation."

"You are right," answered numerous voices.

"Well, as some of us are invariably locked in at night, suppose we make the hour as early as possible," said Smiley.

"Just as it commences to get dark," added Taciturn.

"That is a good hour," said Bonnie.

"Where shall we meet?" questioned Josephine.

"Where is he now?" asked Leslie.

"In a little corner, under the driveway into Mr. Brownloe's barn, just about two blocks from here. Polly Wog must have been coming here. Oh! I wish I had been there, I'd have killed that dog. I did chase him right out into the public street, and the boy came after us, but it was too late. By the time I returned more boys had come; ragged, dirty, rough hoodlums, and they were throwing him at each other. I made a lot of fuss until the boys thought that I was a mad cat, and then they ran away. Then I pulled Polly Wog into the little corner, and, oh, dear! I tried so hard to bring him to life."

"We know you did," said Columbus, his big, golden eyes full of sympathy and his head drooping.

"Then shall we get together quietly, just as the dark comes down?" asked Eulalie.

"Yes," answered several of the gentle friends.

"Perhaps the best way would be to collect as near the place where he is hidden as possible, and watch our chances, for we can carry him only a short distance at a time," said Romeo. "We shall necessarily have an outlying band of watchers, to warn us of approaching danger, and why not, right here and now, make these arrangements?"

"All right," said Prince, "I will lead the way, with my friend, Frank, here, who never says much, but is as good as gold."

"Who will carry him?" asked Queenie.

"I shall, of course," said F. O. Fowl.

"I shall help," added Columbus meekly.

"So shall I," said Leslie.

"And I," "And I," "And I," continued our loving and sympathetic friends.

Muggins and Ho-ang-ho, were appointed rear guards, and Leslie, Katrina, and Taciturn were to guard the right, while Eulalie, Josephine, and Sun Down were at the left.

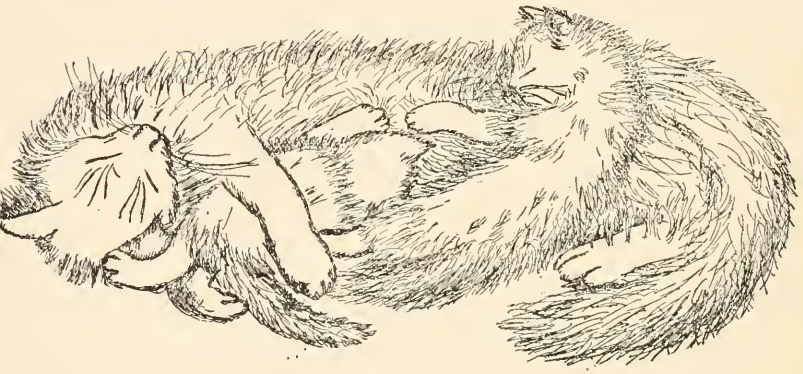
"I must help carry him," whispered Scat.

"Oh, no!" said Pinkie, "you had better stay at home. You are too little, you know."

"No, indeed, Scat," said F. O. Fowl, "you go right along with me. You will be ever so much help."

Scat looked as pleased as she could under the circumstances, and no one offered objections again to her accompanying us.

"It would be some comfort," said Dolly Varden, "if we could mark the place where we bury him, but anything to distinguish the spot from



its surroundings would only invite disturbance of his resting place."

This seemed reasonable, and we all necessarily acquiesced in Dolly Varden's judgment.

"Who will dig the grave?" asked Turvey.

"I shall, of course," said F. O. Fowl. "I would just like to, as long as it must be done. Oh, oh! Our Polly Wog! I'll imagine it's the faces of those who helped to make him miserable and killed him, then won't I *scratch!*"

It was agreed that all the other cats should accompany us in a way least liable to attract attention, but ready to warn of danger, and give assistance as occasion required.

All arrangements seemed to have been made, and Starlight had aroused himself sufficiently to assume a less crouching attitude, but thus far had said nothing.

Placing my head near his, I asked:

"Are you pleased with our arrangements?"

"Perfectly," he whispered, without looking up.

"Do you think of anything more for us to do now?"

"Nothing."

"Then shall we adjourn?"

"If you wish," he answered in the same heartbroken voice.

After the motion to adjourn, Starlight without looking up, and speaking almost inaudibly, said:

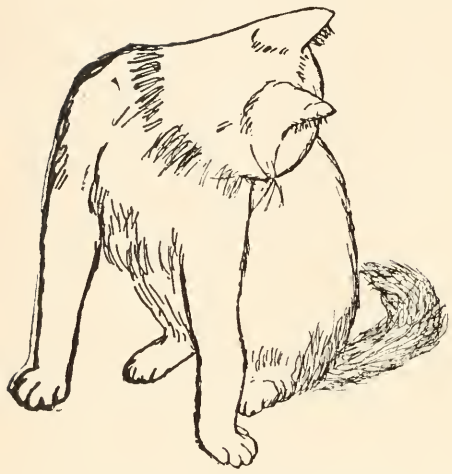
"All those in favor of the motion may rise."

Most of the members went away silently, leaving F. O. Fowl and myself with Starlight. It was some time before we could get our President composed enough to leave for home, and then we went with him to his gate, and watched while his mistress picked him up and said:

"Well, old sweetness, you came very nearly being late for dinner."

"We may readily believe the story we heard in one of our sessions regarding the whipping once given to Starlight," said I. "You may

remember his mistress was induced, against her will, to whip him in order to teach him to shake hands, and after the punishment was administered he did not come in the house for three weeks, and then had to be coaxed in and shut in, until he became reconciled. When any unfortunate thing happens to him in his relation to human beings he just keeps still and submits. He has plenty of spunk and vim when it comes to a seemingly necessary fight for himself or others, but anything in the way of punishment, rebuke or sorrow in the least, is too much for him."



"If he had not fallen in with his present owners he long since would have ceased to exist," said F. O. Fowl. "Such sensitiveness is a dreadfully unfortunate possession, and there are hundreds of cats possessed of it, and the consequence is, they become wrecks and die when they are a year or two old. They are nothing to human beings but 'sick kittens,' and suffer the usual consequences; being killed outright or left to starve. If they did not realize the whole thing, it would not seem so dreadful, but their thoughts, indeed, are 'long, long

thoughts'. I am glad that I am ugly instead of sensitive."

Just then a dog came smelling along the alley, and with a sound like an engine emitting steam F. O. Fowl started for him.

The dog wheeled and rushed for help through an open gate, and F. O. Fowl came back saying:

"Fffsssss-ss-ss, that cur knows me."

"I think you will not have even as much patience with dogs as you used to have," said I, "and you never had any to spare."

"Indeed, I shall not," he answered. "Dogs are not necessarily cruel, it is easy enough to teach them to let cats alone. St. Bernard and Newfoundland dogs, being high bred, are apt to be friendly with us, and, of course, I am with them. There are individual dogs in other breeds that are decent. I have known dogs and cats that were the best kind of friends. The more of a mongrel the cur the more inclined he is to torture us."

"A rule," said I, "that seems to hold good with the human race, as well, according to the developments with which our convention has been favored."

"You are right; the dirtier the people and the dirtier the house, the more ready to say, 'Nasty cat.' Starlight has traveled, you remember, and he asserts that the cleaner the house, the warmer his welcome."

Our little conversation seemed to have quieted our feelings, and our parting injunction each to the other was, "Do not fail to be on time to-night."

* * * * * * *

The crescent moon was just descending below the horizon when we commenced our sad pilgrimage. We knew we had a severe task before us, but I think we were all glad to render some service to all that was left of our poor friend.

Starlight was present, and had somewhat regained his composure.

"All has been so well arranged," said our President, "that there is no necessity for any formal business in connection with our sad duty. You all know the parts that you are to perform. Our sweet Topaz is lame, and I would not let him come. He cried to come—the darling. We love him so much, but he is not strong. If you would let me help carry poor Polly Wog, I should be glad."

Of course, this was objected to for various reasons, most especially because Starlight was too conspicuous by reason of his color and size to risk observation. Necessarily, we should be obliged to be very circumspect in our progress.

I presume to a thoughtless human being the immediate cortege would have been mirth-provoking, but to us it bore no resemblance to

anything but pathetic duty, fulfilled in the dark, because of the persecution of our race.

Columbus, with his head high, carried the upper part of Polly Wog by the neck; F. O. Fowl, in the same manner, held him by the hips, and, something that at any other time would have amused us, Scat had fastened her teeth upon the tip of the tail and was carefully walking by the side of F. O. Fowl and carrying her little head as high as possible, to keep the poor crumpled tail from dragging.

We were interrupted four or five times, and those who were carrying our dear dead friend were obliged to hide him in a corner and run out of the way. Numerous rests were necessary, but neither one of the burden bearers would accept assistance.

At no time was Starlight far away; it seemed as if he could not endure to lose sight of the unfortunate one for whom he had had so much sympathy. Some of us involuntarily resolved ourselves into a bodyguard for our President, to warn him of danger, for it was astonishing how far his fair white proportions were visible, even in the evening.

It was a lovely place that Prince had chosen. It was beneath a large white lilac bush that had been recently moved, and the earth around was mellow and soft, and so freshly disturbed that evidences of our work would not attract atten-

tion. It was also a secluded place because other shrubbery was near, and we were quite a little distance from the house, which, the grounds being large, stood quite alone. A potted ivy was resting in the shade of the bush, and it seemed to us like an urn in honor of Polly Wog.

We found considerable of an excavation all ready, and Prince explained:

"Frank and I," said he, "removed part of the earth for F. O. Fowl to finish, because we knew he would be very tired."

Indeed F. O. Fowl, Columbus, and little Scat were exhausted, and sat panting for some time.

When sufficiently recovered, F. O. Fowl sprang to his feet and said:

"Well, we must proceed. Get out of the way, and let me scratch. Oh! how I wish it was the faces of his persecutors! Fffss-ss-sss!"

If you ever saw earth fly, it flew then.

I have seen dogs plowing for a woodchuck, but I never saw any animal scratch as furiously as did our F. O. Fowl. We appreciated his emotions, his heart, and when a lump of earth hit us in the face we were glad of it, and the harder it hit, the more it satisfied our feelings.

At last the grave was made, it was large and deep, for the grave digger said: "No one shall disturb him."

We stood for some time looking down at the bare, empty place.

"I wish," said Dolly Varden, "that we could wash him before we bury him."

But Dolly Varden knew that was an impossibiilty, and she did not press the point.

"I wish that we had something pretty to line it with," said Starlight.

"Oh! we have," said Frank. "Columbus and Pinkie came up this afternoon with some ribbons, and here are two handkerchiefs that I—I—took."

We did not question Frank's morality, we wanted the handkerchiefs so much, but Starlight looked a little sorry.

We spread the handkerchiefs nicely out in the grave, and, as by one impulse, we scattered through the grounds and came back bringing red salvia blossoms, China asters and pansies, and of these we made a soft bed, and then we placed our dead friend upon it. Starlight had a beautiful blue ribbon around his neck, and Columbus a pink one; both pulled them off and dropped them upon Polly Wog. Every cat that had a ribbon on then pulled it off and added it to the offerings.

Thus far we had left his face uncovered. Then we all circled around, and each one reached way down and touched poor Polly Wog's head and said:

"Good-by, Polly Wog."

When it was Starlight's turn he held his white paw on Polly Wog's head a while and said:

"Good-by, *our* Polly Wog, not, *poor* Polly Wog."

Then we folded the white handkerchiefs down over "our Polly Wog," and over his face. We threw more flowers down, and all of us helped to replace the earth.

We made it as smooth as possible, spreading it around, that there might be no indications of recent disturbance.

Then we all sat down, drawing close together, and Starlight spoke as follows:

"Dear friends, a sufferer has gone. Some time we may be permitted to meditate upon the possibility that he is not entirely obliterated, that there is something about us that still lives on. In our honest endeavor this summer to elevate our condition by enlightening the world concerning us, we have learned the value of coöperation. We have already decided upon the benefits that may be derived from a permanent organization, and what time and place are more appropriate than the present for its initial movement?"

"Not any time and no place so appropriate," we said.

"Polly Wog was with us all of the time," continued Starlight. "During his life he never

missed a meeting, and we did for him as much as we dared, continually hoping we could change the sadness of his lot. That privilege has been denied us. As the breath has left his body, the will has left it, and we may honor him if we please. Here, and now, then, in memory of him if it meet your approval, I suggest that we form a permanent society, and ask that you elect officers for the same."

Not one cat present would hear of anything else but that the present officers be reëlected, which was done in a subdued and quiet manner.

"What shall be the name of our society?" asked our President.

"Let it be 'The Polly Wog,' " said Columbus.

"My thought exactly," responded Starlight; "and to avoid the danger of making too much noise we shall consider that the name, unless there is an objection."

There was not one dissenting voice.

"We may call ourselves the 'P. W's.," suggested Dolly Varden.

We all accepted the idea with pleasure.

"How often shall me meet?" asked our President.

"I move that we meet the morning of every fourth Monday," said Romeo.

This was agreed to and then it came time to return to our homes.

We walked three times around Polly Wog's grave, each time saying:

"Good-by, *our* Polly Wog," and then casting sorrowful looks behind us, we hastened away to our respective homes.

Starlight, Columbus, Dolly Varden, F. O. Fowl, Scat, and I were close together, and had proceeded quite a long distance in the dark, when I suddenly discovered that Scat was carrying something in her mouth.

"What in the world have you there, little one?" said I.

Dropping the object for a minute, she said:

"Oh, that is an ivy leaf that fell from the plant upon Polly Wog's grave. I am going to hide it to remember him by."

Then she picked it up and trotted along.

Almost immediately a lady and gentleman made their appearance, and as it was near a light, we large cats moved quickly out of sight, while Scat stopped and looked the lady directly in the face.

"Oh, see that cunning little kitten carrying something in its mouth," said the lady, who was pretty and had golden hair and pink cheeks.

"It's a forlorn little thing," said her friend.

"Yes, but I believe it is intelligent, or it

would not be carrying anything that way. See her hold on to it and look at me. I have half a mind to take it home. I don't believe it has a home, it looks so thin."

"Oh, you can find a prettier one than that," said the gentleman.

"I don't want a prettier one. I shall take delight in making something comfortable that needs comfort, and if I am not very much mistaken I shall have a sleek, fat, cunning, wise pussie here that will surprise you."

In the meantime she stooped, and lifted Scat, cuddled her down with hands that looked soft and white, and we were so happy that Scat had found a home that we could hardly keep still.

The lady, I suppose, thought that Scat was emitting purring mews, but this was what she was saying to us:

"Oh! I'm so happy! So happy! I wonder if it is wrong to be so happy so soon after burying our Polly Wog!"

"You are right to be happy, dear, little Scat, we are happy for you," we answered.

"I shall call it 'Ivy,' " said Scat's new-found mistress. "See how it holds the ivy leaf. Little

Ivy, I shall put that leaf away for you, it seems so precious to you, and perhaps I should not have noticed you if you had not been carrying the leaf."

"Oh! her hands are so soft and warm, and she smells like roses. I believe she'll even give me cream," Scat gurgled to us.

"How it purrs and talks!" exclaimed the lady. "You little darling, I love you already."

"Hear that? Hear that?" murmured Scat to us. "Come and see me some time soon."

"Good night, little Scat," we said, "we shall certainly come and make you a visit."

"So happy, so happy!" were the last words we heard from Scat that night.

We were so glad that Scat was pleasantly provided for that we went home with happier hearts than we would have thought possible this sorrowful evening.

"If Scat had not been carrying that leaf as a remembrance of Polly Wog, the lady would not have noticed her," said Starlight. "I am glad it was through her own faithfulness and tender heart that she was rescued from discomfort."

"And evidently introduced to luxury," I added.

With a few kind words and a promise from F. O. Fowl to call soon, we left him at his gate.

When within a block of Starlight's home, we heard anxious calls for:

"Kittie Starlight! Kittie Starlight."

"I must not let my mistress get anxious about me," said our President. "I am never out so late."

So we ran for the house, and I saw his mistress take him up in her arms and heard her say:

"Why, old sweetness, I thought you were lost."

I believe I wish I were Starlight.

Here ends my report of "The Cats' Convention." May it win for us a recognition that will make happier and better our race, and the one that holds us in subjection.

Signed, GYP,
Secretary of the Cats' Convention.

P. S.—I am informed that the publishers are going to have my picture taken and placed at the beginning of the first chapter. I feel very much flattered. GYP.